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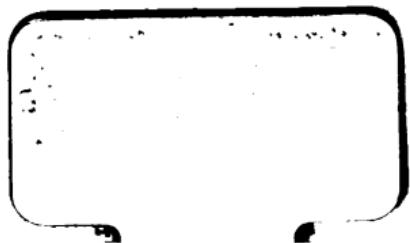
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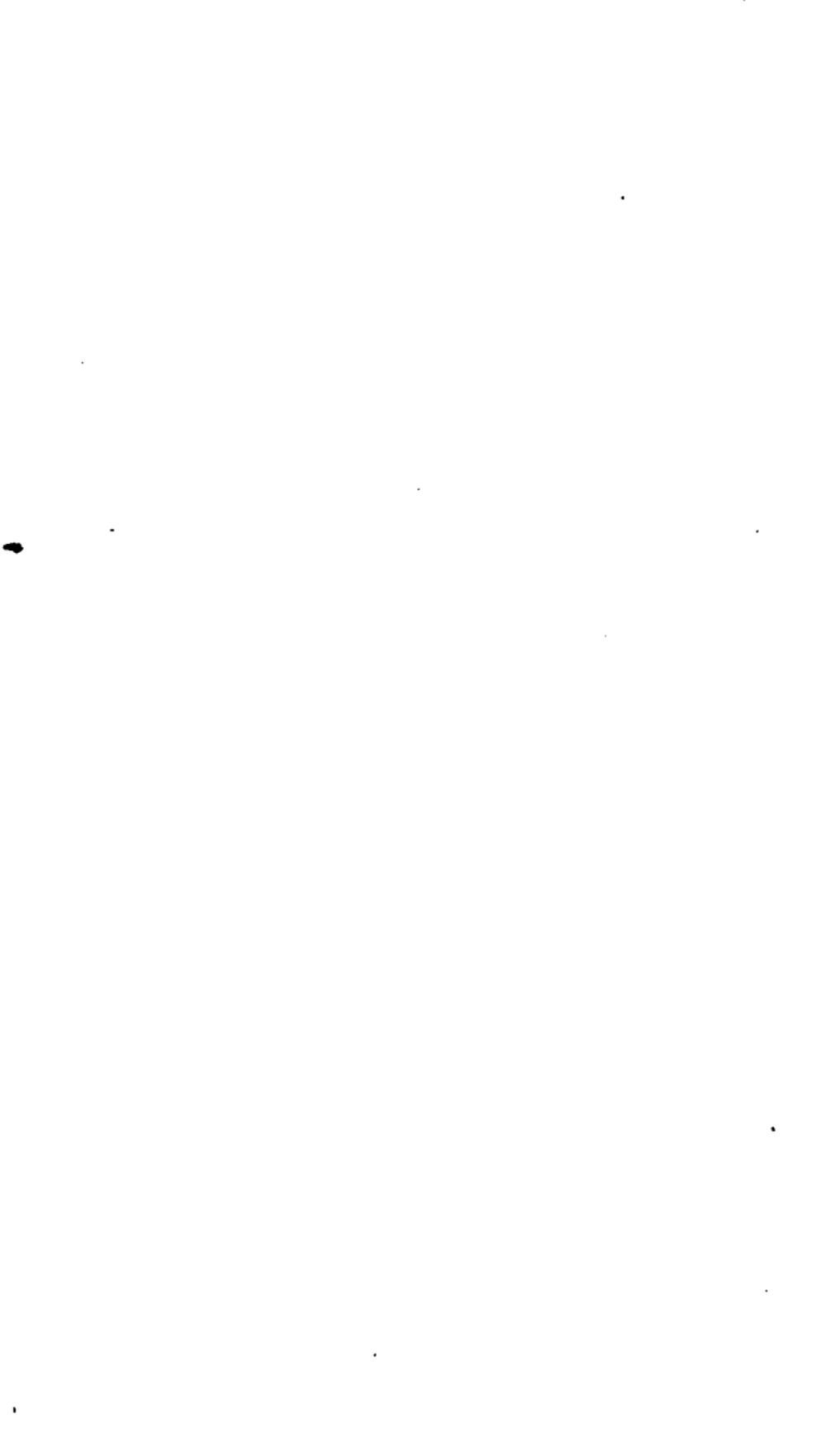
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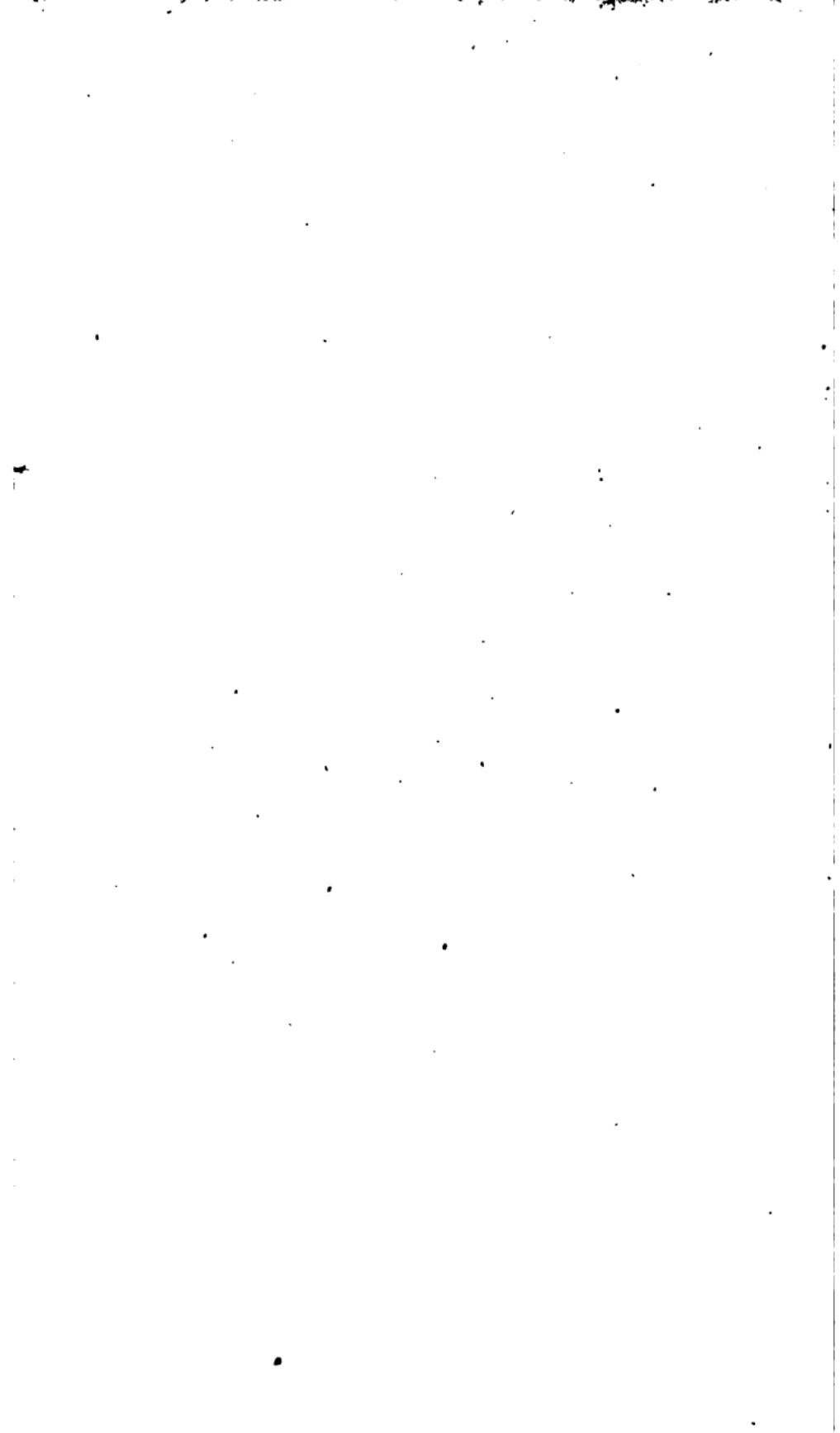
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THE RECESS;

OR,

A TALE OF OTHER TIMES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY SOPHIA LEE,

AUTHOR OF

CANTERBURY TALES, LIFE OF A LOVER, &c.

“ Are not these woods
“ More free from peril than the envious court?
“ Here feel we but the penalty of Adam—
“ The seasons’ difference.”

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THE RECESS.

PART III.

FROM this temporary death I was at last recalled by a sound that made me wish it had been indeed eternal—the voice, the tremendous voice of Williams. Of what horrors was my soul instantly susceptible! What dreadful images swam before those eyes I hardly durst open! Fearfully at length I cast them around—I saw I had been conveyed into the great room of our Recess, sacred once to piety and innocence, but now, alas! the shelter of rapine, perhaps of murder. A number of ill-looking ruffians stood ready to fulfil the worst commands of their ferocious confederate, who, with malignant joy, contemplated two hopeless victims unpitying Heaven seemed

to have delivered entirely to his vengeance. I gave myself up for lost—*myself*—I alike gave up lord Leicester, who, thus disarmed and surrounded, collected his soul in silence, and resumed the majestic air which once could awe even this villain to subordination. I every where perceived a variety of instruments, nameless to me, which I considered as the means of torture and of death; and only supplicated the Almighty to spare us the first, since to avoid the latter I supposed a fruitless prayer.

“ You see at last,” cried the exulting villain, “ fortune’s wheel has made its circle, and my turn is come, lord Leicester. How could you hope to conquer a man whose all was courage? Neither sir Francis, nor even Elizabeth, could long confine one who dares precipitate himself into the ocean in search of freedom; not,” added he in an ironical tone, “ that I shall fail to requite my obligation to you.”

Lord Leicester replied but with a look—a look so superior, contemptuous, and collected, that it wrought the rage of Wil-

liams to a still higher pitch, who turned towards me, malignity burning in every scar of his horrid face—" You are welcome home, fair lady," continued he, " though your visit is an unexpected favour, without the idle train too, which once attended this idle favourite. You see we have made a little free with your hallowed mansion, but the saints take all in good part. Do you not inquire after your foster-father? he would tell us no tales, nor will he ever now tell you one." Oh, Anthony! I shuddered in silence for thee, thou venerable murdered friend! " Monster," burst forth lord Leicester, " hast thou, with unexampled cruelty, butchered an anchorite?"—" I always work safely," returned he; " *you* have only saved me the trouble, for never would I have rested, till by some artifice I had drawn you once more hither, and God, you see, most graciously has sent you."

" Blaspheme not thy Maker, oh cruel wretch!" sighed I, in a tremulous accent: " just, though severe, are all his ordinations; and, lo! with sad submission, I take

the death appointed me even from thy hands!"

"No," cried he, "though you are not the haughty beauty I adored, yet, as the wife of that imperious lord, you become but a more perfect means of exquisite revenge."

The nature of that revenge blazed in his countenance—my heart turned to marble within me. I raised my eyes towards heaven in speechless agony, then rivetting them on lord Leicester, found life recede too fast, for my ear to distinguish one word of that bitter indignation which the voice it loved so loudly uttered.

I almost doubted whether my senses were indeed returned, when I found myself involved in impenetrable darkness. The piercing sigh of some one near me was the only sound that broke the stillness of the night. "If," cried I, in a feeble tone, "that is the voice to which my heart was born to vibrate, oh tell me; beloved Leicester! whether the scene which yet swims before my sight was real or a vision?"—"Gracious Heaven!" returned he, in a voice yet more piercing, "you breathe

again, my soul's best treasure ! the long, long fainting, caused by the threats of that execrable monster, and which held during your removal into this dungeon, gave me hopes that you had finally escaped a fate too horrid for reflection. Oh, dire extreme of despair and misery, when I am condemned to wish you dead ! and yet what else can deliver you ?—yet think not, Matilda, I fear to follow ;—ah no ! the best blood burning in this bosom should joyfully embalm you ; but the thoughts of all which may precede that moment, almost urges me to dash my distracted brain against the stones on which I lie, and shorten my own sufferings, since hopeless of averting yours."

" Call up your fortitude, your reason, your religion," returned I, in a firmer voice ; (an emotion which united all those sentiments diffusing itself through my frame) " dare I accuse the Almighty of injustice ? Will He, who first gave my helpless innocence a hallowed shelter within these walls, ordain that they should prove its tomb ? the shades of those who reared me will surely rise in its defence."—" Alas, my love,"

sighed he, in a despairing voice, "these visionary hopes may sooth the mind, till that sad moment nothing can avert—have you forgot that even in happier times you hoped nothing from the villain? and is this an hour to expect a change? Revenge and want have seared his soul to all humanity. How—how could it ever escape my memory, that he was acquainted with the secret of the Recess? how, under such uncertainty, durst I ever venture within it? but short-sighted man, solely employed in weaving snares for others, too late finds his own feet entangled, and falls an easy prey to the ignoble. Not satisfied with heading this set of coiners, for such their apparatus proved them, the daring temper of Williams breaks forth in acts of plunder and barbarity, and even at this moment he is seeking new victims, though possessing, unsought, those he would out of the whole world have chosen."—"Shall we complain Heaven has quite abandoned us," resumed I, "when it has given us but one moment to ourselves? Oh, Leicester! you have hitherto found me a tender, anxious, fear-

ful woman ; but, alas, I knew not till now the powers of my own soul. Abhorrent of shame and dishonour, it tempts me to the most desperate deeds ; if yours is indeed congenial, it surely understands me ; assume a Roman courage, and save your wife, your spotless wife, from horrible pollution."—"So much I agonize at the idea," cried lord Leicester, that were these hands free, perhaps——"—"And mine too," added I, "feeble as they are, alike are bound ; yet surely despair will give me strength to loose them." The violent efforts I made at last broke the slight thong the villains had thought more than sufficient to confine one in my feeble state, and encouraged by my success, I sought lord Leicester. At the moment I restored his liberty, I half revived, while the sole use the tender Leicester could make of his arms, was to press me a thousand times to his swelled heart, which almost burst with anguish. I struggled against all the sad tenderness which throbbed at my own. "Oh, think no more of love," cried I, with increasing heroism ; "it has given place to death—to worse than

death—rather imagine you hear this dungeon once more open."—"But can I lift that hand, which pledged itself for thy protection, against thy life, thy precious life?" groaned he—"can I deface that angel form, which still illumines my soul through all these complicated horrors? And oh, our dear unborn! for whom we gladly suffered, can I—can I destroy it?"—"Think, think, my love," returned I, "that we have perhaps this only moment—had these wretches left any means of death in my own hands, do you imagine I would supplicate it from yours? Strangle me now, while darkness favours. Your wife demands of you this final proof of love and courage; hers will at least vie with it; no groan, no struggle, shall issue from a heart which then will return innocent to that dust from which it sprung, devoted alone to the adored husband with whose image it is doubly inhabited."—"Oh, matchless, matchless woman!" cried my lord, flooding my cheek with tears of generous anguish, "never, never can it be; my sinews relax to childhood; your unlooked-for fortitude totally

subdues mine, and melts my soul to woman's weakness.—Oh! thou who gavest me this angel, canst thou have abandoned her to brutality, and me to distraction?"

A peal of thunder, which shook the ruins to their foundation, seemed to reprove his boldness. The livid lightning pervaded our dungeon through many a time-worn aperture. During every tremendous illumination I gazed awe-struck on the pallid face of my love, till suddenly glancing around, I gave a cry which startled even myself—glowing, gasping, transported, yet still unable to speak, I sunk before my lord, and clasping both his hands, alternately prest them to my heart, and lifted them, with mine, towards heaven. "What means my beloved?" exclaimed he, in almost equal surprise and agitation; "has pitying Providence deprived her of her senses?"—"Ah no, it is God himself who has illuminated them," faltered I at last; "what dungeon has man yet discovered the Almighty cannot: you have often heard, my love, of one communication

from the Recess to the Abbey : closed up on the death of Mrs. Marlow, it was never opened after, nor was it known to that horrible villain, Williams ; this dismal den contains it, and we tread on the only spot in the creation which could shelter us from the ruffians. In the corner on the right hand, covered with lumber, placed long since on purpose, you will find a trap-door ; if you have strength to raise it, strong fastenings will secure it on the other side, at least till we reach the Abbey. Oh thou," added I, devoutly raising my eyes, " who alone couldst preserve us, continue those flashes, more welcome than ever yet the sun was."

Impressed solely with the present danger, it was not till we had descended into the vaults, and fastened that blessed door between ourselves and the banditti, that either recollect what he might apprehend at the Abbey. Assured that none but an opulent owner could reside in a seat so splendid, we vainly racked imagination to discover its present possessor ; yet persuaded even our worst enemies would rescue

us with pleasure from a peril so nearly connected with themselves, we were obliged to defy every other. The housekeeper's room, into which the passage led, was empty, yet scattered furniture, &c. indicated inhabitants. I hailed, with true devotion, that power who gave me once more to see the soft lustre of the moon, which on the subsiding of the storm diffused serenity. Retaining in his hand the bar (which had been one fastening of the Abbey entrance) as the only weapon in his power, lord Leicester followed my trembling steps; they turned intuitively to the apartment of Mrs. Marlow; ah that there I could have found her! I paused at the door of the antichamber, and my heart sickened with despondency—knowing that there was an immediate necessity for rousing and arming the whole family, yet convinced we must at first alarm them as preternatural beings, and afterwards, with the conviction that our escape introduced a danger to themselves, while ignorant whom we were going to appear before, well might the firmest heart tremble. Engrossed by these

various and affecting ideas, I hardly heard a sound, which made lord Leicester start forward, with an eagerness that might easily have deprived me of the little strength Heaven had left me. The antichamber into which I immediately followed him was dark, but in the room beyond I perceived a light, and heard the voice of a woman apparently supplicating. Scarcely had I distinguished, in that of the man who answered her, the dreaded Williams, ere I saw lord Leicester start forward, levelling the bar with so desperate a boldness, that the fall of the villain ascertained our safety. Instantly snatching a knife from the wretch's hand, he pointed it at his bosom, but perceived a perforation in the brain, which made his punishment as terrible as his guilt, and his death immediate. "Execrable monster," cried my lord, dropping the knife, "by unlooked-for means Heaven at last has finished thee!" — "Gracious God!" cried the lady, "do I hear the voice of lord Leicester?" Amazed at this discovery, and the preceding event, hardly could my trembling limbs

convey me into the chamber. " Approach, my dear Matilda," cried my lord, " never more shall this wretch appal thee. Eternal justice is satisfied with one blow, nor need I turn assassin even to him. Happy at the same moment in saving this lady, endeavour to interest her for those misfortunes in which she already seems interwoven."—" Can lord Leicester ever know a misfortune in which I am not interwoven ?" cried the lady ; " to have received my life from his hands alone could reconcile me to it." Had I not known the speaker by her voice to be the fair Rose Cecil, such language must have ascertained it : yet to find ourselves under the roof of our most mortal enemy, was a cruel stroke. " Is it possible we should be in the house of lord Burleigh ?" cried lord Leicester, disdainfully. She, sighing, replied—" He fortunately is absent ; nor can you ever be unsafe in any house where I am mistress."—" You know not to whom you speak," cried I, in turn : " alas ! Miss Cecil, do you still remember the friendship you have so often professed for the unfortunate Ma-

tilda? Ever has she lamented the sad necessity of veiling her fate from a heart so noble; accept then, at this unexpected moment, that confidence I always longed to place in you; and tell me whether you still can resolve to love her who was the wife of lord Leicester long ere she saw you—her, who at this moment renders him a fugitive in his own country?" Miss Cecil's distressful eyes wandered from him to me for some moments in silence; then taking a hand of each, she first kissed, and afterwards uniting them, said, with a Spartan firmness, "My friend!" but turning instantly from him, to hide her glowing cheeks and impassioned tears in my bosom, sobbed out, "my deliverer!" Her beauty (which was rendered more obvious by her disordered appearance, the ruffian having compelled her to rise and half-dress herself), her innocence, and her generosity, appeared at last a little to affect lord Leicester, who had hitherto shewn her an indifference almost amounting to disgust. "It remains with you, madam," returned he, in a softer voice, "now to become

mine. Miss Cecil no longer sees the worshipped favourite of an imperious queen. United alike by choice and law to the dear companion of my dangers, a chain of occurrences reduces us to escape by unknown means from England, and with the utmost dispatch. Nevertheless, those even Elizabeth's rage might have spared, were only an hour ago devoted by that lifeless villain. Escaped this moment almost from a den of slaughter, hardly can we tell whether the banditti, of whom this was the ringleader, are not now surrounding us. Summon all your courage and your domestics; and, while providing for your own safety, I need not solicit you to remember ours."—"When I forget it, may I be condemned to see you perish!" cried she; then turning to me, with that innocent candour which eminently distinguished her, sought a pardon in my eyes. Collecting all her thoughts, she continued, in a few moments—"Astonished as I must be, both at your circumstances and your visit, my noble friends, curiosity yields to friendship. With the morning I expect my father, nor

is there any safety for you but immediate flight: nevertheless, this danger with which you say we are environed, must be the first consideration." I then explained to her the secret of the Recess; the direful mistake which had thrown us into the power of its present diabolical tenants; and the desperation which the discovery of our escape, with the means by which it was effected, must inevitably cause; except indeed the loss of Williams should abate their ferocity. While I talked, I frequently perceived her mind wandered on another subject. She surveyed the disguised persons and pale faces of both my lord and me a thousand times over. By fits she shook with horror at the story I was relating; and by starts she forgot I had been speaking, and obliged me to go back in my tale. Employed solely in concerting the means of securing our safety, her own seemed hardly a consideration. Such is the nature of love in the mind of a virtuous woman. "I see," said she, when I had finished, "the necessity of somebody's appearing, to account to my servants for

the discovery of the villains. I see too that lord Leicester cannot be the person; for who can fail to know him?" The inference thus tenderly conveyed was obvious: *one* must be seen; but I could not resolve to be that one, without a dismay which surpassed complaint. "Yes, my dear Matilda," added she, "we must part with him for a little time; but you will rejoin him for life. By the ordination of Providence, as I could almost suppose, the son of my nurse is now in the house—a young man over whom that circumstance gives me a powerful influence. Against the choice of his friends, he embraced a sea-faring life, till he acquired money enough to purchase a small vessel, with which he trades between the coast of Devonshire and that of France; but already disgusted at the profession he chose, it was only yesterday he arrived here to solicit my interest with my father to promote him in a civil line. Say not then Heaven frowns on your flight, since it plainly points out a secure mode of escape. I cannot but discern that every avenue to Hol-

land must be effectually closed; but who could think of tracing you to the distant and obscure coast of Devonshire? It is true, the journey is long; but to compensate for that, you must recollect that it is safe. The travels of Arthur have been confined to the road by which he conducts you; and his connexions are doubtless among people who will furnish you with every common comfort, without having curiosity or understanding to penetrate through the mystery of your rank. I see too what your expressive eyes, my dear Matilda, would point out—the impossibility of long concealing the share I have had in your fate; since how else can your miraculous appearance here, or the terrible death of my midnight visitor, be accounted for? But what of that?" she generously added, after a moment's pause; "much ought to be ventured when our all is at stake."—"I have expected every moment," said my lord, "some dreadful interruption from the rest of these wretches." "No," returned Miss Cecil, "I have every reason to imagine this villain was alone.

When first, by his entrance, I started from the slumber into which I was falling, I began collecting my purse, and every ornament near me: he rejected them all; and, compelling me to rise, commanded me, with terrible imprecations, to conduct him to the private cabinet where my father concealed his state papers; hoping, doubtless, by possessing them, to learn many secrets, which might ensure his own pardon; for that must have been his ultimate object. I knew the character of my father so well as to debate whether I should not rather give up my life than a trust so precious, when the terrible intervention of lord Leicester released me from the conflict. Yet I agree with you, that a moment ought not to be lost; and first let me lock up the room which contains so shocking a testimony that more than one man has intruded there at midnight." Conscious of her own merit, she encountered even the eye of lord Leicester without tremor, who could not but admire in her at that moment all the magnanimity and foresight which ennobles man, with

every softer grace that half deifies woman. For my own part, I clasped her to my bosom, declaring that I could never love her more than I did, long ere this proof of her merit. "This is the only topic dangerous to either," returned she, a tear beautifying her smile, "we will all love one another as well as we can. But now, my lord, attend to the next step, if you dare rely on my direction: we will conduct you to the door leading to the garden; make your way over the wall on the side farthest from the wood; a mile beyond, you will find a bridge; wait near it in silence; Arthur shall first hide a horse for you, and then set out on another, to convey this lady, as if to her home, in some adjacent village; the confusion attending the discovery of the vaulted passage will render the family, most probably, inattentive either to her presence or departure; and ere they are enough at leisure to discover Williams, or form any dangerous conjecture, you will both be, I hope, beyond the reach of discovery or pursuit. But oh, my lord! if you would have ei-

ther of the trembling wretches now before you survive this night of horrors, use the strictest caution in seeking your appointed shelter, nor leave it till you hear the voice of Matilda."

Lord Leicester promised; and conducting him softly through the house, we reached the door leading to the garden. All the horrors of the past were short of what I felt at that moment. After the dangers I had shared and escaped with my lord, to see him depart was to quit my guardian angel, or to deprive him of his: yet, convinced that Miss Cecil was actuated by the same fearful affection, I yielded to the desperate emergency. The closing of the door after him severed the hearts of both; it was then only we knew the support we had derived from his presence: wan, speechless, helpless, we durst hardly turn our eyes on any object but each other, nor utter a sigh but it swelled into a groan; and the ghastly body of Williams seemed for ever to impede our footsteps, floating the path with blood. Miss Cecil took the only possible method

to divert our terrors; and soon rousing a few terrified domestics, commanded them to summon all the family—a command which needed no repetition. A few minutes gathered together eighteen or twenty men, sufficiently armed to secure us from any personal danger. I conducted the whole astonished body to the private door through which I had entered; I described the place to which it led; and, touching slightly on my own danger and escape, recommended to them that profound silence the villains had preserved towards us with such fatal success. During this time Miss Cecil selected the man she mentioned to us, and retiring into the next room, gave him her orders unobserved, so entirely did both my appearance and strange story engross the attention of every individual belonging to the family. Miss Cecil, rejoining us, ordered them to divide, and that while half remained to guard the house, the rest should descend, and passing into the dungeon from whence I came, wait the return of the banditti, and seize them one by one as they entered. This conclusion of the

adventure greatly damped the ardour of the group; but, ashamed to recede from a place through which I had escaped apparently alone, they departed in so numerous a body as might almost fill the den in which I was lately enclosed; the few who remained hovering near the entrance, solely intent on the event of the enterprise. Arthur, in the interim, having the full command of the stables, made ready two horses in the manner already mentioned; and Miss Cecil, with her usual foresight, overwhelmed me with refreshments, which a little invigorated my exhausted frame: nor did she forget to provide Arthur with such as might recruit my lord; selecting from her own wardrobe linen and every necessary the time and occasion admitted. Impatiently I expected the summons to depart, which was preceded by a message from the Recess, that all was hitherto entirely silent, and the door fastened as when we left it;—a circumstance which appalled my inmost soul, as it seemed to leave us still in the reach of the merciless banditti. With mingled tears of grief and hope, I

embraced that generous friend I never more might see; and, quitting the once-hospitable mansion, which seemed of all the universe the only home my heart acknowledged, I seated myself behind a guide, whose sun-burnt features softened into a compassion, few indeed could at that moment have denied me. The moon shone forth with resplendent lustre, and our road being in a contrary direction to that which before ensnared us, I recommended myself to Heaven, and anxiously expected the meeting with my lord. We had not proceeded far, when that dear protector (who had in fearful affection for me defied his own danger, and returned almost to the Abbey) started from under a clump of trees, and with a voice that dissipated terror, welcomed my return to freedom, and sprung upon the horse our guide had before led for him. Such is the effect of an evil escaped, that I almost forgot my excessive fatigue, and could have fancied myself safe.

Recent circumstances at first occupied my thoughts, and during the intervals of

silence, the addition of a stranger must naturally impose, my imagination once more returned to the dungeon ; it pictured the fear and horror the wretches themselves must in turn feel, when unknown hands condemned them to a fate like that they had allotted to us. Again I wandered to the court ; I seemed to see Elizabeth burning with embosomed rage, while the helpless noble Ellinor became, as its immediate, its only object. I greatly relied on the watchful friendship of all the Sydneys, but hardly could I hope even that would rescue her from the queen. I knew the letter lord Leicester had ordered to be delivered to Elizabeth two hours after our departure, would infallibly explain to her the secret of our marriage ; which of itself confuted the tale he had advanced concerning our birth : nor could I doubt but that every artifice would be practised to unfold the whole mystery ; and, alas ! ungenerous minds too often fasten on the victim cruel fortune puts most into their power.

Yet in the haste and confusion attending

our flight, we had found it impossible to unite my sister in it: neither at that unhappy juncture could she be found, and all the care we could shew for her safety, was to recommend her in the most strenuous manner to those few friends we expected the discovery would leave us. While Ellinor had the resolution to retain her own secret, we knew the power of the queen could not reach her, and the strength and foresight she had at many times shewn, persuaded me that she was equal even to this hardest of trials. Yet could I think of the insolent interrogatories and contumelily she must inevitably encounter, without a bleeding heart? to be the gaze of every eye—the object of every tongue—oh, greatly did she need the consciousness of innocence, the pride of royalty to sustain her!

It had ever been our plan, if fortunate enough to escape safely into France, to remain still in disguise, till couriers from England could inform us how far the plot of Babington, and particularly lord Leicester's knowledge of it, had transpired. If it appeared his share in that scheme was

undiscovered, my lord, might with safety avow himself; as marrying privately was a crime only in the eye of Elizabeth. And knowing too well that her favourites ought ever to consider their influence as precarious, lord Leicester had long since scattered large sums in the hands of different merchants in various kingdoms, as a resource he now found his only one; nor was it insufficient. If, on the contrary, we learnt Elizabeth had dived into that dangerous mystery which he was censurable only for concealing, by the charge of treason, she could perhaps affect his safety in France, nay almost in Europe; and to preserve his life, some disguise must still be maintained while hers lasted.

Though separated in infancy from every one allied to me, nothing could ever detach my heart from family claims; not daring to look towards my mother, I had always passionately desired to see the sole surviving sister of my father, Margaret lady Mortimer. Educated with the late queen in the Catholic persuasion, she had married a general, and with him held many distin-

guished places under Philip and Mary. The revolution both in politics and religion caused by the accession of Elizabeth, was fatal alike to her honours and her pleasures. General lord Mortimer followed the widowed king to Spain, and raised on his favour a fortune that gave him power to fix his own fate, when death suddenly decided it. His relict retired to Rouen in Normandy, where his sister was then abbess, leaving her younger son in the service of Philip, and her elder in the army of Francis II. Naturally of an active temper, lady Mortimer could not resolve to give up the world, though attached to it only by disgusts ; she continued to lavish a large portion of the immense fortune her mother and husband had united to bequeath her, in cherishing every exiled enemy of Elizabeth. Elated with the vain hope of one day seeing her ill-fated brother enthroned in conjunction with the queen of Scots, she had entered into all his measures while that union was in agitation ; and emerging once more from her convent, journeyed to Rome, where she spared neither pains nor

money to win friends who might authorize and ratify it. She was among the few who knew the marriage secretly took place; she even knew it was likely to produce heirs of royalty and misfortune; when the discovery, trial, and execution of the duke of Norfolk, entirely crushed her last fond project. From that moment she had remained uninformed of the secret soul of Mary, and the fate of her unhappy offspring. The avowed disgust she had shewn towards Elizabeth, made it dangerous for her to return to her own country, and hardly in it could she have arrived at such important intelligence, when once the clue was lost. Aspiring, rich, and restless, she had always affected to appear the patroness of all oppressed Englishmen; and if I found it prudent to avow myself, I knew that I might safely rely on a welcome from her who would find with joy every hope so long extinct renovated in me. Our present journey conducted us to a coast almost opposite to that of Normandy. I fancied a pleasure in having it in my power to claim my aunt's cares in the approach-

ing melancholy crisis, and was not without hopes lord Leicester might safely appear in his own person, when once my sister had escaped to rejoin us.

These various reflections fully occupied my mind till the dawn of day, when our guide assured us we might safely rest in the hamlet to which we were near. Convinced by Miss Cecil's confidence in him that he might fully be trusted, I entered, with weary limbs, a cottage, from whence its laborious inhabitants were just issuing to work. They used their utmost diligence to procure us a homely meal, and we retired almost stupified with intense fatigue to a bed which had only cleanliness to recommend it. Here both sunk into a sleep so profound, that the day was closing when we arose. Our watchful guide assured us that we must hasten over the dinner which had long waited for us, as we had many miles to journey ere we could find another safe resting-place. Earnestly did I wish to remain with our present hosts till the morning, but submitting to necessity, remounted in silence. Arthur well justified

the confidence of his lady, having selected horses that never flagged through the whole journey, and always guarding against discovery by conducting us through roads very little frequented: among which he found hamlets whose inhabitants were gratified in merely seeing him, and who only attended to his companions in the hope of obliging him. I was astonished at observing how little curiosity we excited, forgetful that the mind is worn down with the body, and that a common labourer rarely considers any thing beyond those common comforts incessant industry alone can procure him.

Insensible to the beauties of the country through which we passed, I was for ever employed in looking for the sea, and when at last I discovered it, strove to extend my sight beyond, and dwell on that shore where I alone could think lord Leicester safe. The nearer we drew towards the coast, the stronger my fears became. It was inhabited chiefly by men hard by nature and desperate by profession; accustomed to murder as well as plunder those

wrecked on the shore, they sternly examined and defied every passenger. I could hardly persuade myself that some of these were not stragglers from the banditti of Williams, and blessed Heaven as though all peril had been past, when we arrived at the homely dwelling of Arthur. It stood on a lonely part of the shore, where lofty cliffs shooting far into the sea, gave safety in the little bay to a few fishing-boats and small vessels. Ah, how do our awakened passions entirely curb every prejudice! Those livid lightnings, at which my nature ever before shrunk, appeared of late but the quivering lamp of love. Now I saw and heard undaunted the encircling sea (once the happy boundary of human pursuits), whose restless waves roar a proud defiance to all who dare approach it; and my sole fear sprung from learning that the wind was entirely contrary, and the watery chasm yet impassable.

Too late we lamented departing unattended. Unable in this sequestered spot to discover any part of what had passed in the court since our flight, and unwilling to

trust, as well as unable to spare our guide or his friends to make an inquiry at the next town, several tedious days elapsed in melancholy and conjecture. Arthur, not being able to go out in his own vessel, without suspicions and examinations we durst not encounter, hired a large fishing-smack, in which he stored the few necessaries our limited situation allowed us to provide, and I watched without ceasing the playing of its streamers. One evening I perceived them suddenly point towards France: rest having recruited my strength and spirits, I started up in a transport of joy. The few mariners being gathered at last together, I stept with a lightened heart into a miserable boat, which bore us swiftly towards that destined to convey us over, when two strangers riding full speed to the shore, called to us to put back with the most frantic eagerness. I took the alarm, and offered the mariners imaginary worlds to row on, when Arthur insisting that he knew the voice, turned the boat. I threw my arms round my lord, as though my

heart would have opened to hide him; and regardless of his remonstrances, that we could be in no danger from only two people, however hostile their intention, my senses died away. Recovering at last, I found myself in the cabin of the vessel, reclining on the bosom of lord Leicester, while a youth who knelt at my feet pressed my hands alternately to his lips—"Look up, my beloved," cried my lord, "and see whom fortune has united in our exile."—"Ah, rather do not look up, lovely Matilda," cried Miss Cecil (for it was that sweet girl indeed in the habit of a boy), "till you have considered what reception you ought to give the selfish friend who has dared to interweave her fate with yours. Yet hear before you judge me," added she, rising with a mild majesty which gave unspeakable graces to the blushes that every moment visited and retired from her cheeks. "I am going to lay my whole heart before you both. It is in vain to attempt veiling a weakness from lord Leicester, so many circumstances have concurred to betray; it remains with me then to enoble it. The

discovery of your marriage, my amiable friends, quenched the last feeble hope which lingered in my heart. Convinced that my partiality could never constitute his happiness, I instantly resolved it should become his pride. Self-love expired before the elevated idea. Ah, what but this could have enabled me to lead him into the garden at midnight, and take a look I then thought a last one, without dropping a single tear? I saw in a moment all the merit, the charms of her character whom he had chosen. Should I hate her then for being all I would have endeavoured to be? for accepting that distinction (which not depending on youth, beauty, merit, or fortune) is the dearest bounty of indulgent Heaven? Ah, no, my heart was juster, and welcomed her as one born to divide it with lord Leicester. Solely intent on the prosperous flight of both, I almost forgot the servants planted in the Recess, and the monsters that infested it. I fancied to myself those hours, when all your dangers past, you would sometimes think of her, who could only think of you. I heard

both sigh, and wishing but to be enough remembered to soften without wounding either heart, I sighed myself; and started from these pleasant reveries at the voice of our steward, who rushing abruptly into the room, dismayed my every sense with his recital.—‘Rejoice, madam, rejoice,’ cried the man with honest zeal, ‘and think this stranger born for your service. Never can we enough adore the astonishing interposition of Heaven! It is not long since when tired with watching in the dungeon, a variety of voices struck our ears, which soon approaching us, every man summoned all his courage; shortly the door was unbolted, and a ruffian darted in, whose daring look was changed to an icy paleness (which lights from behind reflected) when he found each arm seized by one of our people, while a third held a pistol to his head. Uttering a faint imprecation, he alarmed the rest, and both sides immediately fired. We then pushed forward without any regard for those who fell, and pursuing the rest through the various avenues of the den, secured them all, as

we have reason to imagine, astonishment half depriving them of the power of resistance. In the largest apartment of this strange place we found (guess, madam, how we were amazed!) our lord, with an unknown lady, and three of our fellow-servants, who were newly brought in by the ruffians, and bound: dreadful, no doubt, would have been their death but for this miraculous deliverance!"—Alienated as my affections must long have been from my father," continued Miss Cecil, turning the discourse to herself, "I could not hear of his wonderful escape without feeling the most lively satisfaction. It was damped, however, by recollecting the body of Williams. I saw too plainly that I must now account for it, to one invested with authority to inquire, and resolution to convict me. Lost in a variety of plans, my father had been some minutes in the house ere I stirred from my own antichamber, where his approach at once confined me. Faint and silent I arose, and, bending before him, wept forth my duty and my joy.—'I know all you would say, my child,' cri-

ed he, eagerly, ‘and how this horrible place was discovered ; but where are lord Leicester and his lady ?’ Struck dumb with a question, as clear and decisive as if he had been a sharer in the transactions of the night, my eyes were fixed upon him in terror and stupefaction, when my brother, impatient for the discovery, made his way at once into my chamber, whither the loud exclamation he gave collected all present ; nor could my father resist hastening as fast as his infirmities permitted ; hoping, as I had reason to imagine, he there should find that enemy, who more engrossed his thoughts than the preservation of his own life, or mine. How were all amazed, when the lifeless villain, Williams, alone appeared ! Some examined his pockets, while others searched the chamber. My father spoke not for some time, when fixing an eye on me falsehood never durst encounter, he pointed ironically to the body— ‘ You killed him, doubtless,’ said he ; and relapsed again into his meditation. After a time, some faint remembrance glanced across his mind. He drew near, and ex-

examining the dead man's features, seemed to recollect, and in recollecting, to dread him; for at once he shrunk into himself, and repeated in a low voice, '*that villain!*' Not having, however, any clue to his thoughts, though he had to mine, there rested my idea of the matter. I collected all my courage, and framing the most plausible tale the present situation allowed, resolved to abide by it, whatever the event. My father likewise settled his plan of proceeding, and far from regulating the servants, whose every motion fear made wild and eccentric, turned his attention solely on me. Rising at last with a stern air—
'Rose,' said he, 'follow me.' I had of late been but too much accustomed to that harsh voice, and obeyed in silence. Seating himself in an adjacent apartment, he demanded an exact recital of all the horrors of the night. I commenced with the being roused by Williams. I related his design, and the threats which had almost brought my life to the point of a moment, when, substituting Arthur for lord Leicester, I affirmed that it was his providential

arrival, guided by an unknown lady, and the desperate courage supplied by the emergency, which had rescued me from the knife of that inveterate villain. He interrupted me, eagerly inquiring for the lady. On my assuring him she was gone—‘Think well,’ cried he, in a terrible voice—‘think well, rash, romantic girl, ere you venture again to answer me. I know the cause of Leicester’s flight; I know too, its companion; I know that he escaped a few hours before from the dungeon in which I was found; I know, if so, who must be his confederate. Stain to the name of Cecil, degenerate wretch! not content with the blind credulity of youth, to embosom, rescue, and abet a traitor, wilt thou conceal his wife? Tremble at the vengeance of thy sovereign—tremble alike at that of thy father.’ Convinced (by whatever wonderful means he was so fully informed) that I could not hope to debase him, I started up, my complexion changing every moment—‘I indeed find myself, my lord,’ cried I, ‘unequal to a falsehood, but you will find me equal to the most desperate

truth. It was lord Leicester, I own, whom Heaven itself brought to my relief; and shall I deliver him up to death who saved me from it? Oh never, never! Sheltered in a spot less liable to suspicion than that from which they lately escaped, he with his chosen happy bride can safely wait till the violence of the queen gives place to justice. Tortures should wring no more from me; and whatever my fate, it will always admit of one sweet consolation, in the remembrance that Heaven allowed me to recompence a benefit at the moment of receiving it.' Why should I repeat," sighed our fair narrator, "all the rage, tears, and altercation, that for a few days made life a torment to me? Totally confined to my apartment, and treated like a criminal, it was even hinted that my continued obstinacy would provoke my father into making that horrible den, the Recess, my prison. In one instance alone was I fortunate: my mysterious speech had impressed on my father's mind an opinion he had previously adopted, that lord Leicester, with his lady, must be secreted in or

near Kenilworth Castle, whither his most trusted spies immediately resorted, and amused him with various suppositions dispatched daily from thence. Oppressed with unkindness and severity, often did my weak, my wavering heart prompt me to follow, and if possible overtake you; but the instant recollection of the obvious track such a rash flight must open to your inveterate pursuers, always subdued so unjustifiable a wish. My father at once changed his measures; and releasing, carried me with him to every suspected place in the neighbourhood, hoping from the alteration of my features to discover that which contained lord Leicester. By a fatality which completed my misfortunes, in one of these tours we encountered Irton, that lover who cost me both the queen's and my father's favour: encouraged by lord Burleigh once more, he returned with us. Incapable of love, but infatuated with politics, his ardent desire of holding a rank in his favourite line through my means revived. Regardless of my tears, coldness, and disdain, he had always looked up to

my father as the decider of his fate, and still continued to do so. I had the misery of learning a bargain was made, of which I must be the unconsenting pledge, and that almost immediately. I knew my father's inexorable nature: I knew likewise that of Irton, and had reason to dread that the next fit of rage would consign me to legal infamy; unless, by a desperation on my own part I prevented this on theirs. Wonder not that at last I yielded to a measure so long combated. I selected a servant in whom I had a confidence, who procured me this disguise, and offered to protect me. I blest that faith I could never hope sufficiently to reward; and winged alike with hope and fear, pursued your route with indefatigable diligence, having left a letter which spoke of London as my asylum."

To this generous recital my lord and self replied with reiterated assurances of friendship and protection, as well as the highest encomiums on her courage and conduct: shortly after which my lord quitted the cabin—“ You who have long been the

confidante, the sole confidante of my weakness," resumed Miss Cecil, in a tender tone, while her doubtful eye seemed to search my very soul, " will be less surprised at its effect than its confession. Yet even that, strange as it may seem, sprung from prudence. I had well considered, my dear Matilda, every part of my past and future conduct. I too plainly felt, that while I imagined my lord a stranger to the impulses of my heart, it might still adhere to him with a dangerous tenderness. By the boldness of this step I have made him a judge over me, and shall act with the severest prudence. I know your generous disposition, seeing only the better part of mine, might have induced you still to wish me near you ;—how could I resist so sweet an invitation ? Ah, only by silencing the most decisive pleader ! Lord Leicester can now never urge me on the dangerous subject. In whatever place you fix your residence, I will retire to a neighbouring monastery as a boarder, where always hearing of, and sometimes seeing both," added she, in a voice broken by sobs, " my wishes

will be completed ; nor do I imagine you will in the interim grudge me a share in lord Leicester's danger."—" Ah, little do you know me," returned I, pressing her hand affectionately, " if you think I could grudge you a share in his happiness. Never, my tender, generous girl, never more will we part : never could lord Leicester *hope*, or his wife *fear*, any thing unbecoming from a soul like yours. Actuated but by one sentiment, counterparts by nature of each other, you and I should violate her laws were we to separate."—" To own the whole truth, my sweet friend," returned she, with her usual noble ingenuousness, " I expected this instance of your generosity ; but it only confirms my resolution ; and my own heart would anticipate the condemnation of yours, were it possible for me to waver."

A sense of safety, and of gratitude to my fair friend, diffused itself through my soul as the evening closed, to which I had for some time been a stranger. Lord Leicester pressed us to enjoy the sweetness of the hour. We ascended the deck, and seating ourselves in a little boat lashed to it, every

fear, every hope, seemed suspended, and the present all of our lives for which any had a sense. The gentle breezes only played upon the white sails, and the vessel cut with a safe and pleasant motion through those green waves whose points the full moon exquisitely silvered, as breaking they gave life to the stillness of the night. I turned my eyes with the sweetest satisfaction from my love to my friend, from my friend to my love; the same mild orb delicately illumined either face; a manly tenderness marked lord Leicester's attention to me, a grateful deference that to Miss Cecil; while the fair Rose, rich in the applauses of her own heart, and nobly conscious of her claims on ours, forgot that there was any thing wanting to her happiness. These sacred pauses in life, which lovers only know, invigorate the soul as sleep does the body, and alone can enable us to sustain the past and coming ills. Prepared by a mental calm for the happiest repose, sleep asserted a claim to those hours fear and fatigue had long possessed, and my lord insisted on remaining above. The loveliness of the weather,

though the autumn was far advanced, made this less dangerous; and Miss Cecil at last consented to share with me the only miserable bed, which nevertheless afforded us that rest a palace had often denied. The next morning entirely reversed the scene, and destroyed at once our comfort and tranquillity. With the moon the weather changed; and the wind becoming entirely contrary, that deadly sickness incident to voyagers seized alike on Miss Cecil and me, absorbing even the sense of danger. With an exhausted sullenness we surveyed those roaring surges, whose hollow fancy could not venture to fathom, and saw ourselves driven almost back to the shore of England, without strength or spirits even to lament our cruel destiny. My lord, happily, more used to the sea, resisted its influence, and exerted himself equally in comforting the sufferers and assisting the sailors; happily too they were all well acquainted with the coast; while the contrary wind and enraged elements constituted, in one sense, our safety, as every other vessel took shelter in the nearest port, and waited in safety more far

avourable weather. Tossed about for near ten days, we at last made Havre-de-Grace early in the morning, when, more dead than alive, I was conveyed to the first inn, and instantly put to bed.

Here my fatigues and apprehensions were very near producing a misfortune I from the first had dreaded. I had but too much reason to fear that the poor babe who had been the innocent cause of these calamities would never live to reward us for them, but urged into a premature existence, of all this mighty world would claim only a grave. The grief this gave me increased the danger. I knew the passionate desire of offspring which possessed my lord; I had often flattered myself this wish, if indulged, would fill up that void in his life the promise had caused. What then should I suffer to see such a disappointment added to the sacrifices and degradations I had already entailed upon him! It was at this crisis all the merit of Miss Cecil shone forth: to the delicate attentions of a friend, she united the soft solicitude of a mother. She soothed my mind with the most flattering hopes;

and, jealous lest in any fretful moment my secret soul should doubt her attachment, she so entirely forestalled every suspicion, that uninformed spectators would rather have imagined me the only source of her happiness than the sole obstacle to it. At length I conquered the danger, and then my spirits returned faster than my strength. Often I talked of England, of my sister, and the expected dispatches. I wrote to lady Mortimer, and briefly related those incidents I have here explained in many pages ; I claimed her alliance, her protection ; explained the present delicate situation of my health ; and enclosed my picture, in little, not doubting but that would identify my birth ; and part of the diamonds we brought with us were converted into money, to establish our rank, if we found it prudent to acknowledge it.

I continued a long time too weak to quit my chamber, yet at intervals a new fear disturbed me. I perceived my lord absent and anxious ; an extreme paleness often overcame the floridness of nature,

and traversing the room for hours, he would give way to a chagrin, the cause of which not all my tenderest entreaties could wring from him. I often recalled the words of my sister; I fancied he vainly regretted the distinction of royalty, the pride of splendour, and the pleasure of popularity. Accustomed to be the object of every eye, to have every wish fore-told, to be obeyed ere he spoke, I sighing owned the change in his fate might well appear dreary. Not daring to hint my ideas, I impatiently expected the return of the express sent to Rouen, hoping it would open new prospects, and disperse the heavy cloud between him and felicity. But, oh! how delusive is human perspicacity! Insolently vain of our bounded knowledge, we boast of tracing every thought and action of individuals, seas divide from us even at the very moment we misjudge all with whom we are immediately surrounded. My fond attention, fixed partially on lord Leicester, looked not out of himself for causes of grief. Lady Mortimer's answer at length arrived; she

acknowledged her relationship to me with surprise and pleasure, and kindly lamented that her infirm health did not permit her to pay, in coming to me, that deference my regal birth entitled me to; but assured us her train waited our permission to escort us to Rouen, whither she urged us to hasten, as well for our own safety, as to gratify her impatience. My expectations being fully answered by this letter, breathless with joy, I raised my eyes to lord Leicester, who had been perusing it over my shoulder: they met his, full of a sadness so meaning, that it numbed my very heart.

Long used to dread every day would teem with some horrible event, I snatched his hand, and in broken accents only begged to know it. He sunk at my feet, and hiding his tears with my robe, swelled with sobs that almost cracked my heart-strings.—“ You have told me you loved me, Matilda,” said he, in a broken and doubtful voice.—“ Told you !” re-echoed I; “ heavens and earth ! can that, my lord,

remain a question? Have I not for you forgot the rights of sex, of rank, of every thing but love?"—"Have I not done all man could to deserve these sacrifices?" again demanded he.—"Debate no more admitted merits," cried I, with wild impatience; "oh, give me the truth, and all the truth at once; nor doubly torture me with this pomp of preparation! Whatever it is, I will remember there might be a worse, since my eyes still behold you: every evil but your danger my soul can surely cope with. You speak not yet: we are then discovered, betrayed, delivered up, condemned!—the fatal power of Elizabeth has reached us even here; for nothing else can surely thus affect you?"—"It has indeed," sighed he.—"Oh why then," exclaimed I, "forgetful of all my assurances, am I unprovided with poison! for death must now be the only mercy hoped. May the ocean, from which we with so much difficulty escaped, entomb us on our return, rather than resign us up to her licensed vengeance!"—"The power of Elizabeth has reached us,"

added he, more mournfully, " though not in our own persons. Safe still in my arms, in my heart, you may, my love, long arraign and bewail a misfortune all Europe will bewail with you." His sympathizing eyes explained the truth—the agonizing truth—my soul understood him. Aghast with horror, my eyes seemed to set, and every limb to stiffen to marble; a sensation to which fainting is ease, condensed every faculty; and nature, powerful nature, struck on my heart at the thought of my mother, with a pang, perhaps, equal to that with which she bore me. The radiant sun of love seemed to dip into a sea of blood, and sink there for ever! Unable to reduce the torrent of my ideas into language, I buried my head in my robe, and pointed to the door, that all might leave me. Happily my lord saw a prudence in compliance, and laying down several letters, instantly retired. A horrible transport for some moments benumbed me; how multiplied, how complicated, how various, how new, were then my feelings! feelings which ever re-

turn with the remembrances ! feelings which opened a vein in my character as well as my heart !—all sense of gentleness vanished. The first paper I perused confirmed my fears—I saw in the first lines the decided fate of the royal Mary—I seemed to behold the savage hand of Elizabeth, dipt in the blood of an anointed sister sovereign. I felt that she was my mother, my fond, my helpless mother, and my heart floated in tears, which were hours working their way up to my burning eyes. The furies of Orestes surrounded me, and thundered parricide, nothing but parricide, in my ear. What, groaned I, after so long an endurance, such complicated evils, supported with a patience that left not her enemies a pretence for sacrificing her, that misery was reserved for her daughter? Perhaps even at the moment she laid that beauteous head, so many hearts were born to worship, on the block, every agony of death was doubled, by the knowledge her daughter brought her there. Why did I not perish in the Recess by lightning? Why did not the

ocean entomb me? Why, why, oh God, was I permitted to survive my innocence? In the wildness of my affliction, I cursed the hour, the fatal hour, when I ventured beyond the bounds prescribed me. Yes, love, love itself, was annihilated; and (could I once have believed it?) deeply did I wish I had never seen lord Leicester. Passing from paper to paper, I saw friends and enemies unite in the eulogium of the royal martyr. What magnanimity, what sweetness, what sanctitude, did they assign to her!—she became a bright example in the most awful of trials. Subliming the idea of revenge inseparable from human nature, she comprised it in comparison—and what a comparison! casting off the veil of her mortality, to darken over the future days of Elizabeth, the radiant track of her ascension concentered, while it dimmed, the eyes of those surrounding nations, who too late bewailed their shameful inactivity.—“Spirit of the royal Mary! oh, thou most injured!” sighed out at last my exhausted soul, “from that blessedness to which the

wretch now levelled with the dust perhaps too early translated thee, beam peace and pardon ! assuage the horrors of the involuntary sin ! and, oh, receive my life as its expiation ; or a little, but a little, soothe its sad remainder ! ”

Yet vain and uncertain were all my ideas respecting the discovery I imputed to Elizabeth. Convinced that nothing had ever been entrusted to friendship, I was assured nothing could have been betrayed. In the bosom of my sister our mutual secret rested, and there I imagined every motive must bury it. I reviewed every paper once more : alas ! I only added to my affliction, by observing that the name of Ellinor was industriously avoided. Lost in conjecture, it was some time ere I perceived one letter my robe half covered : I pressed to my lips the writing of lady Arundel.

“ Scarce dare I allow myself time to congratulate you, my most honoured friend, on escaping the deadly rage of Elizabeth, so much do I know you long for news of your sister. Alas, that I could

return, in that information, the pleasure yours gave me ! Called to visit lady Pembroke, whose danger was too sudden for me to be apprised of it, Ellinor came back to court the very hour that my lord and you left it. She took the place of my sister (who ought to have been in waiting), and by this means she was unfortunately present at the time the queen perused lord Leicester's explanatory letter. Unbounded in her resentment, Elizabeth levelled it all against the unfortunate Ellinor ; and in severely taxing her with treachery and guilt, dropt expressions, by which she learnt the dangerous situation your flight had unfortunately placed her in, as well as the evils to which you both stood exposed. Grief, fear, and indignation, almost deprived her of reason ; and the queen, insisting her silence proceeded from obstinacy, threw at her a large book she had been reading, which striking the sweet Ellinor on the temple, she dropt senseless at once. The other ladies cut her laces, and the eager eyes of the queen

were attracted by a small packet suspended to the black ribbon she always wore round her neck. Not even the surprising effect its contents took on the queen has ever enabled any one to guess at them : colour, strength, and speech, for some moments forsook Elizabeth, when, recovering her faculties, she once more perused the memorials, then deliberately tore them into atoms ; then summoning Walsingham and Burleigh, all her attendants, save the old lady Latimer, retired. From the court Elinor was conveyed that night, though by whom or whither is yet a secret. Love and friendship are however incessantly employed in her favour ; nor can her prison long remain so when once it is discovered. Were I to name the most ardent and anxious of her lovers, I should surprise you ; but he shall only be known, when with conscious pride he presents her to you, and claims his reward.

“ The profound policy Elizabeth has always preserved with respect to lord Leicester since his flight, has been far from satisfactory to his friends. She speaks of

him only in an indifferent light, and as if employed by herself; while all that passed between them almost every body understands, though no one dares to say so. It seems indeed as if her rage had been diverted from him by another object. I need not name her here. Alas, how severely are you both revenged on the queen! The galling chain from which she has at last enfranchised Mary, writhes round her own heart; and if it would gratify you to see Elizabeth tremble, believe me you need only see her. Obliged to avow remorse, to give an example in the severity of her mourning, for a deed only her will could have authorized, she has the misery of knowing her murdered royal prisoner enthroned in heaven, and embalmed in the tears of even her own people. Nevermore will she taste of peace; for that indeed can only dwell with innocence."

The full conviction that Elizabeth had incurred the abhorrence of all the world, by this horrible infraction of the rights of royalty, society, and sex, a little gratified my exquisite resentment.—"Yes," sighed I,

“Heaven has invented a punishment proportionable to her crime. Counteracting by one stroke the policy of her whole life, she has permitted herself to be known, and of consequence execrated. Destined to survive her youth, her virtue, her fame, and her happiness, although encircled with a diadem, her weary head shall vainly seek one faithful tender bosom to repose on. Those fiery passions, so often destructive to others, wanting now an object, must prey upon the heart that conceals them; till envying the glorious end, as she ever did the distinguished bloom of Mary Stuart, her fate is wound up in fears of her offspring. In vain her cruel care would extirpate them; every crime will but give birth to a new fear, and the martyrdom of the queen of Scots will multiply the causes of her terror, since she now knows that more than one child survives her.”

As the evening closed, this billet was given me from my lord:

“The heart which has long bled by anticipation for your sorrow demands to partake it with you. Oh! my sole love, deny

me not a share in your compassion! Fearful every moment lest I should lose the daughter, the fate of the mother struggled with that grief in my soul, nor durst I communicate it till concealment became impossible. I do not ask you to be comforted; weep on, my dear Matilda, but weep in my arms, for what have I left in life if you forget to love me?"

This little billet, happily calculated to awaken the softer passions, drew forth my tears in great abundance. I reproached myself with violence and unkindness.—"Let me not," cried I, "while so severely lamenting one error, be guilty of another—lost to the duties, the claims (oh, Heaven, that I should be so!) of a daughter, those of a wife—ought to assume a double influence. Yes, chosen Leicester, I am yours—I am ever yours; if this oppressed heart does not wholly dissolve in sorrow, you will one day become again its only object; and sacred from this moment be the rights of all united with me!" I collected my wild afflicted thoughts, and raising them in prayer, a blessed composure overcame the

agitations of my mind. Passing into the next room, where I heard my lord walking, I threw myself into his arms.—“ Oh, you whom I have so fatally loved,” faltered I, “ you who are now nearly my all, fill up, if possible, every avenue to my heart, and guard it from retrospection !” He answered not a word, but pressing his cheek to mine, our tears mingled.

“ I see too plainly the truth, the fatal truth,” said I, recurring to lady Arundel’s letter. “ Lovely, ill-fated sister, it was you then who accelerated our hapless mother’s death ! That Elizabeth knew me for a daughter of the Stuart line, she took a deadly means to certify ; but how she discovered it, must ever have appeared miraculous without this letter ; I now plainly perceive that my sister indiscreetly wore the duplicate proof of our birth, its dearest and best testimonial, while mine is yet treasured in the secret cabinet at Kemilworth ; and this in one moment destroyed her own peace, and determined the fate of her mother. Oh, most inexorable ! could thy vengeance demand more than one vic-

tim? Is then the daughter silently sacrificed on the lamented grave of her parent? Never more, beloved sister of my blood and heart, shall I behold thee! never more draw comfort from thy sweet accents, nor with thee pierce through the veil of futurity, and catch gleams of golden days. Doubtless Elizabeth imagines this the only authentic proof existing. Oh! if in consequence of that opinion she touches the innocent life of Ellinor; I will offer incontestable evidence alike of Mary's marriage with Norfolk, and our birth, at the foot of Henry's throne. He is famed for justice and generosity; I am, alas! the helpless object of both. The house of Guise will unite to protect me; perhaps all Europe will aid too late the powerless king of Scots, and save him from feeling his impotence of royalty."

Unable entirely to share, unwilling in the least to control my tender feelings for my family, lord Leicester's life could not at this period be called happy. Miss Cecil again appeared our guardian angel. As an intermediate person, she felt for, she sooth-

ed both, till my irritated passions mellowed insensibly into sadness. I began to listen to the flattering hopes she continually instilled, that my sister still lived, and some fortunate event might yet restore her to us. My lord was assured, by the united testimony of his friends, that Elizabeth had no pretence for impeaching him, and Henry learnt with pleasure his design of fixing his residence in France; thus again our peace seemed re-established on a better foundation than it had yet been; and I devoted my attention, for the present, solely to recompensing my lord for all he had renounced in my favour.

Overwhelmed with the repeated solicitations of lady Mortimer, I at last summoned resolution to set out for Rouen, from whence we had been supplied with every accommodation suitable to our rank; that city having long been distinguished as the refuge of every noble exile, my lord fixed on it for our residence; my relation to lady Mortimer ensured me every honour, and lord Leicester's name would soon form us a little court. The crisis now

approached very near, which both considered with joy and terror, and it appeared some relief to be under the eye of a lady, whose experience and tenderness might lessen my sufferings. Lord Leicester's unwearied indulgence and anxious consideration, every hour endeared him more to me, and I gladly, on reflection, compounded with fortune for all her other severities, since the first object of my heart was still unaltered.

Averse to being known ere we had formed a suite, and selected a habitation, my lord gave lady Mortimer notice that we should not arrive till night. As we past through the gates of Rouen, escorted by her train, my heart beat high with the idea of meeting the sister of the noble Norfolk, the only being (my own excepted) allied in blood to me. She met me at the entrance of a saloon—I clasped her hands with emotion—I wept upon, I pressed them to my bosom. She embraced me with extreme composure, and holding me back a moment, ran over my features and person, with so keen a scrutiny as convinced

me that sensibility was not her characteristic. While due compliments passed between Miss Cecil, my lord, and her, I in turn indulged myself with an examination: her person was full-sized, tall, and graceful, like all the family of Howard; her features visibly marked both by age and decayed beauty; her dress simple, being, like my own, of mourning, and her manners strongly conveyed the idea of superiority; dignity tinctured with austerity marked her conversation, and I felt, to my great regret, that I had gained a relation, without winning a friend. Two monks, to whom she paid a profound deference, an old officer of the Mortimer family, and his sister, were introduced to us as persons entitled to share our secret; and we saw it indeed lodged with them, ere our consent was demanded. Lord Leicester was struck disagreeably at this discovery, but struggled with his pride and affected good humour; while finding myself, after all my dangers, under a roof sanctified by alliance, and where my lord seemed restored to his proper sphere, pleasure dilated my whole

soul, and I sat down to a sumptuous entertainment prepared on the occasion, with an appetite I had long wanted.

My aunt avoided, in consideration of my state and fatigues, entering into our affairs, and brought her own before us with a kind freedom; assured us of the friendship of her eldest son, lord Mortimer, who had preferred the pleasure of liberty in both his religion and actions, by serving in the wars of France, to seeking a precarious fortune in England under an enemy to the pope. The landed property, once the inheritance of the Mortimers, her lord had prudently disposed of ere the return of Philip to Spain, in whose service he had ever continued; and that monarch, famed as he was for meanness, and ingratitude, had shewn a signal sense of the attachment, by a grant to her youngest son of a considerable portion of land in Jamaica, which he had cultivated under such indulgences as made it every day more valuable. His marriage with a Spanish lady had united him more firmly to their government and interests, but having lately

had the misfortune to lose his wife, he had yielded to the entreaties of his mother to visit France, and was hourly expected. Occupied with her own narration, my aunt no longer remembered that I was weary; Miss Cecil, however, reminded her of the hour, and we were conducted to a magnificent apartment.

Lord Leicester slightly touched on the little disgust he had justly conceived, and indulged a drowsiness which I could not immediately partake. New objects had awakened my fancy, and invaded my rest; images more pleasing than had blest me since the moment I quitted Kenilworth Castle, now enlivened my soul.—“Yes, my Leicester,” said I, softly grasping the hand of my sleeping love, “for me thou shalt no more be endangered and degraded; beyond the reach of our enemies, we may now laugh at all their impotent malice.” Ah, vain and presumptuous! a deadly snare was at that moment winding round my heart, and a punishment prepared, which pierced it through the bosom of security. Alas, madam! this night of pro-

inised peace proved the era of my life, and became so by a misfortune which absorbed the sense of every other. How—how shall I recall the scene, and preserve recollection enough to paint it? Dropping into that soft lethargy which foreruns sleep—ah, why had I not been buried in the deepest? —but I was born the fate of those I loved. It was my peculiar misery to raise the hand which cut them off from all but my memory, and oh, to weep through life the errors of too soft a heart! Sinking, as I have already said, into slumber, I fancied I heard a noise in the room; starting up with a fear habit had made almost intuitive, I awakened lord Leicester, who instantly drew aside the curtain; I discerned with inexpressible horror, by the pale light of a lanthorn, many men surrounding the bed with levelled arms, while one, with an imperious voice, called out to him to surrender to the queen of England. At that fatal sound my very soul recoiled, but my lord not deigning to answer, drew a sword, always laid under his pillow, and haughtily commanded them to leave the

chamber. The men advancing, he aimed at the one nearest him, who, by instantly retreating, jarred the arm of his companion. The flash of death, the tremendous sound, the falling of the sword, all—all confirmed in a moment my fate. Lord Leicester, the worshipped of my soul, my all on earth —alas ! almost my all in heaven, sunk into my weak arms in a last convulsion ! That which at the appointed period shall annihilate nature, can alone surpass the impression of the moment. Terrible too was the confusion of these wretches at so unforeseen an event. The faint light they carried gleamed over those features so adored. He tremulously raised my hand to his lips, and gave up his soul in silence on my bosom.

But who shall speak the misery of my mind ? Precipitated, like the offending angels, at once from heaven to hell, an awful silence took place of lamentation. Oh, it was a woe too mighty for complaint ! Insensible to fear, I at length desperately urged his murderers once more to unite those they had thus separated. I bathed

my bosom in the blessed crimson which still flowed from his, and called alike on heaven and man to end me. Alas! the only object of my hopes, my fears, my cares, my wishes, was congealing before the eyes of the forlorn wretch condemned to survive him. The entrance of lady Mortimer wrought grief up to phrenzy, and for many days gave that relief to all my agonies.

Reason dawned upon my disordered soul like light through chaos. A dim remembrance of what I had been preceded that of what I was. Faintly I recognized even the weak hand with which I drew back the curtain. I found myself in a narrow cell, lighted only through an obscure casement of painted glass. Intuitively my lips pronounced the name of Leicester in vain. Nothing but my own voice returned upon my ear; and the lonely dungeon in which I beheld myself enclosed overwhelmed me with so deadly a chillness, that the shutting of my eyes appeared a degree of relief. Thought rose tumultuously on thought, till in one moment the terrible whole flashed upon my mind. I seemed once more in

that magnificent bed, which from the peaceful asylum of love, an instant converted into the bier of death : once more I caught that last, last look, indelibly impressed, and felt once more my heart congeal with the life-blood which sprung in torrents from his. I started up once more in wild despair ; and wringing my hands, groaned forth his name in accents so piercing, that they roused the withered attendant allotted me from her undiscovered pallet bed at the foot of mine. Hurrying towards me, she muttered something I did not understand.—“Heavens!” cried I, surveying her habit in amazement (for till then I had never seen a nun), “where am I? surely in the Recess ; and the grave has given up its former inhabitants for my relief and comfort?”—“Jesu Marie!” cried she, in French, which I very imperfectly understood, “will this poor thing ever recover her senses?”—“Ah, no!” added I, answering myself; “that fatal language confirms every dire recollection : inform me, you, who are (I know not why) interwoven in my fate, where, where is my lord? if all that flashes over my soul be

But a wandering of intellect, and he yet lives?" She cast down her eyes muttering—"Yes, my poor child, you are sensible, by that question."—"Vain, vain hope," cried I, bursting into tears, and returning to my native tongue—"yet, oh! alive or dead, him alone do I require; restore him—but restore him! a dear, a sacred duty attaches me even to his ashes; lead me to them, since they are all now left me, and allow me to lament at leisure." She shrugged up her shoulders, implying that she did not thoroughly comprehend my language, and crossing herself, denounced eternal perdition on me if I longer thought of an heretic, who seduced me from the true faith, and who of consequence became a dreadful example of vengeance, charging me to adore the Holy Virgin Mother, who had by so gentle a punishment recalled me to the Catholic church. Yes, sainted Leicester, in the infatuation of her bigotry she dared to term thy death a *gentle* punishment. Indignation throbbed through these pulses: grief had nearly stilled, and I gave

vent to all the anguish of my soul ; abjured with an aggravated contempt the erroneous faith of my ancestors, bewailed too late the credulity inspired by my own, execrated the cruel, the treacherous lady Mortimer, and demanded my liberty with a spirit that perplexed and surprised the nuns. Alas ! I perceived at the same moment, by the increasing number who now gathered round my bed, how vain either threats or entreaties must prove in that instance ; the superior approached, and in an authoritative, decisive voice, informed me that lady Mortimer, in right of her relationship, had placed me entirely under their care and protection, relying on their pious endeavours both for the recovery of my reason and my principles ; nor could I make so good a use of the first as to apply it solely to the recovery of the latter, instead of idly lamenting a loss which alone could have preserved my soul. They called the noble husband, of whom their illiberal tenets had just deprived me, an heretic, an outcast of society, a wretch not worthy of interment. I heard without

replying, but my soul was not silent—I appealed to the Most High, and he will not forget me. Oh! in the awful day of retribution, dreadfully will he distinguish the bigoted dictators in religion!

Happily for me they understood less of my language than I did of theirs; this alone, perhaps, saved me from a harshness which must have added the ruin of my constitution to that of my peace.

You will be astonished, madam, at my surviving such unceasing complicated misfortunes, and, above all, the loss of my beloved. I regard it myself with wonder, and impute my strength, both of body and mind, solely to the knowing no interval in my sufferings. Driven from one fatigue to another, from one agony to another, lamentation was continually suspended either by amazement, or that necessity for exertion which gives a spring to all but the weakest minds, and counteracts despondency. Grief, I may affirm from sad experience, cannot be fatal till it stills and condenses every other passion.

Left at last with only that miserable companion, my own heart, I ruminated at leisure. Deprived of lord Leicester, happiness, revenge, name, fortune, every charm of existence, every right in society, entombed alive, ere the ashes of my lord were allotted a resting-place, I reviewed my whole fate with astonishment. Often wearied with suffering, did I meditate giving up a life no longer endeared to me, and quietly pursuing my soul's better part. Alas! the unborn cause of all my late dangers would still recall—still hold me down to suffer.—“Yes, precious remnant of my love, sole pledge of past felicity—last of the mighty Dudley line,” sighed I, “I owe thee the painful blessing of existence—I owe thy noble father's memory justice. I know the profound, the execrable policy of Elizabeth, nor doubt her escaping the slightest censure unless I appear—and shall I, shall I, oh Leicester, living or dead, forsake thee? shall she who cost thee every worldly good, allow thy honour, thy fortune, thy life, to be annihilated, without one effort to retrieve either?

No, since revenge is the little all now left me, let me secure that little. Disappoint, oh God! the weak and enthusiastic views of my unworthy relation; permit me to convey from this unhallowed grave the honoured ashes of my love; let them overwhelm Elizabeth with late contrition and fruitless shame—and then, oh then, allow me to bequeath to my trembling babe that life I no longer wish to groan under!"

To effect any part of these complicated designs, I found it absolutely necessary to stifle, in a degree, my feelings; and submitting to a dissimulation my soul abhorred, I requested to see that woman who was more terrible to my eyes than any thing human, Elizabeth excepted. This request flattered the nuns with the hope of my conversion, and a little opened their hearts towards me. I now learnt that the wretches who robbed my days of comfort, imputed the event solely to accident, nor pleaded a commission beyond conveying lord Leicester to England, and even that in so private a manner as shewed them without legal authority. The whole

had been conducted with so profound a secrecy, that neither the design, nor its bloody event, had ever reached the knowledge of the police; to prevent which, the body of lord Leicester had been immediately brought into an outer vault of the chapel of the convent, where it had been embalmed ready to send over to England, if such should be the pleasure of the queen, which, as it appeared, was all they considered. The jewels and money, both lord Leicester and myself possessed when we entered the fatal gates of Rouen, seemed to have departed with him, as well as every information respecting the lodgment of those sums I have already mentioned; and I saw myself, for all that fortune once promised me, inheriting only a weed.

As I endured with patience the religious visitations and homilies of the nuns, as well as those of various monks, who united with them in converting me, lady Mortimer in a few days consented to judge of their cares by seeing me. This insolent woman considered the visit as a con-

descension, and hardly held out a hand mine shuddered again to touch. Unmoved with my paleness, my condition, or my habit, she calmly discoursed with the sisterhood and the monks, while I continued drowned in tears that no human effort could stifle. A gentleman, who I understood was her younger son, addressed me with a voice of sympathy; uninfluenced by his mother's pious prejudices, he spoke of my misfortune as the first on earth, and of lord Leicester, as the man who most deserved to be lamented, and bewailed the delays in his passage which had made him unhappily arrive too late to succour either. He spoke too in English. The words, the manner, the language, sunk into my soul, and a faint hope they struck out alone enabled me to support the ensuing conversation. Lady Mortimer addressed me with an air at once tenacious and haughty; treated me like a mere girl, who to a blind and unpardonable passion had made perpetual sacrifices of every solid duty of religion and morality; represented me as the sole cause of

my mother's martyrdom—a sin no penance could ever expiate; mentioned with horror that union, which, wanting the sanction of the pope, could not by her be termed a marriage; and valued herself on the happy plan she had laid to separate us. It appeared that the information of our place of residence had passed from her to Elizabeth, who bargained for the secret delivery of lord Leicester to her emissaries—a request lady Mortimer complied with gladly, as the easiest and most effectual means of reuniting me to the church. The plan of seizing him at midnight had, she owned, been concerted by herself, as that was a time when he could neither resist, nor I follow him, to create any alarm—a circumstance she dreaded beyond any other. From the bloody consequence of this treachery she affected to acquit herself, though without expressing any sorrow on the occasion.

“ Oh, negative sin!” groaned I inwardly; “ oh, dire collusion! wanting courage to act an ill, are you, when pre-acquainted, less guilty in not preventing it? the laws of

England reached not hither, nor was lord Leicester amenable by those laws; wherefore entice and murder him, beneath a roof alliance and hospitality should have doubly consecrated? wherefore, but that the commonest inn would have protected him?" Tears and sighs being all my comments on her speech, she joined the monks in elaborate exhortations—in high promises of presenting me to all my mother's partisans, and rendering me the head of the English Catholic party, whenever I voluntarily recanted my errors; or if I persisted in them, anticipating the judgment of Heaven, she resolved to punish my apostacy by an absolute seclusion within the walls which at present confined me. Faint and overcome, I promised to deliberate, and with difficulty obtained the only request I had ventured—the sad indulgence of weeping over the coffin of lord Leicester.

I could hardly fail to discover through this veil of simulation, pride, and bigotry, a strong self-interest. The agreement for delivering up lord Leicester to Elizabeth,

very highly offended those laws which protected lady Mortimer, and to which she must have answered, had the intention only transpired; but when to that was added his murder, his midnight murder, in a city chiefly composed of Huguenots, hardly dared she guess at her own danger. The narrow faith which embosomed her among Catholics, proved in this instance her safety, since united in her danger as well as principles, they were resolved to venture the utmost to secure her. Every subsequent day confirmed my opinion, and the absolute necessity of winning me over, or entombing me alive, made the nuns omit no care or indulgence after once I seemed to listen to them.

Fearful of rousing all my passions, and reviving every prejudice, by conducting me to the dreary unhallowed vault lord Leicester was laid in, and not daring to bring his sacrilegious ashes within their own chapel, the nuns amused themselves with decorating his sepulchre with all the pompous insignia of death.—Ah! vain attempt to sadden anguish! Can midnight

tapers, suspended black, or waving plumes, relieve those eyes which seek in vain their only object, or gratify a heart writhing under the iron hand of calamity? Can mortal prayers ensure immortal happiness, or can self-sainted wretches bribe the Almighty even with the ore his bounty lavishes? Preposterous blindness!—Such were my mental replies to all their enthusiastic harangues; and this ill-chosen moment of assailing me, only fixed my fluctuating religious principles. On the coffin of lord Leicester my secret soul pronounced a vow, solemn and irrevocable, to know no heaven but his, nor seek it in another manner. Thou too, oh most beloved! wert present—but not to me—no more my eyes were to imbibe pleasure from the lucid beams of thine—no more was my soul to mingle with thine, effusions which so often had enabled me to sustain the malevolence of fortune.—Ah, no! thou, thou alone, wert by a strange transition become my sovereign grief; and the cold lead which seared up dust so precious, en-

closed at the same moment the heart of thy sad widow.

I had in vain inquired for Miss Cecil; the nuns assured me they knew only from my delirium that such a person existed, and lady Mortimer inexorably refused to inform me whether she still did so.— Deeply I lamented the loss of the only friend who could have soothed, by sharing, my affliction. Death had hallowed her passion with rights scarce inferior to my own, and my heart too frequently felt none but those who loved could lament lord Leicester as he merited.

Mr. Mortimer soon became the medium between me and his mother; despairing to touch her impenetrable soul, I employed every moment of loneliness in subduing her son's. Slowly I unfolded my views, and slowly too he listened to them—yet he did listen. Fearful that every hour would add a new inconvenience, by the birth of that poor babe for whom I suffered such unremitting calamity, and dubious whether the pious policy of the nuns might not snatch it, as soon as born, from my

feeble arms, as well to ensure my stay as my abjuration, new terrors sprung up in my soul. I could not but perceive that an interested motive actuated Mortimer: reduced, however, to owe my freedom to any thing, I appeared blind to a tenderness every circumstance forbade him to avow. A very few days determined him; and he informed me that he had secured an English vessel, the crew of which were to be his only assistants. How slowly is hope extinguished, and, oh, how swiftly does it revive! Actuated with the most impatient desire of escaping, I made even my grief subservient to it, and proposed to the nuns periodically to watch in the vault with lord Leicester, (a sad ceremony their religion permitted, and mine did not forbid), being told it would be easier to force a way into this than the interior parts of the convent. Mortimer had himself directed in conveying thither my departed love, and allowed it to be an easy means of escape, and perhaps the only one.

I passed part of several preceding nights in the same manner, accompanied by dif-

ferent nuns, to lull suspicion, were it possible any should have arisen. What quick, what multiplied, what various emotions, foreran the appointed time! Every eye seemed to dive into my design, and every heart seemed intent to counteract it. I found it impossible to obtain the privilege of watching alone, and shivered lest my deliverers should arrive ere my pale companion was summoned, or I should want strength to prevent her alarming the sisterhood. Fortunately the night proved severely cold; and observing that she was no sharer in my penance, I recommended to her to retire to her cell, and rejoin me when the matins were over. Disgusted with her employment, and already frost-nipt, she sullenly complied, leaving me alone with the coffin of lord Leicester—lost husband of my choice!—“Oh, ever dear and ever lamented!” sighed I, kneeling before and invoking the senseless lead, “not for herself is thy Matilda thus anxious—to vindicate thy honour, to preserve the precious earth which once was part of thee, and that which will soon become so, is all

the use she can now make of freedom." An awful silence, which seemed only interrupted by the throbbing of my pulses, succeeded. Regardless of all those emblems of the grave which harrow up the minds of the happy, I knew no fear but of the living. The bell struck upon my heart the decisive twelve. A jarring in the farthest vault reached my ear—another opened—I heard the feet of men—another yet—I was environed by my deliverers, and one spark of pleasure ran through my cold frame, as I raised my head from the coffin of lord Leicester.—"Fly, fair Matilda!" cried the impatient Mortimer, snatching my hand to raise me.—"Stay, generous friend, and hear me," said I with firmness. "You rescue only half of me, if you leave the ashes of my lord behind. Would you part a miser from his treasure? rather will he be massacred upon it. *There* is enclosed the whole of mine—bear that likewise away, or entomb me with it; for never, I swear by Him in whose presence we were united, never will I, alive or dead, consent to part with

my husband." Offended at so unexpected a demand, he urged the difficulty and the danger, with a harshness I thought him incapable of; nevertheless, the place and time allowed not of long deliberation, and finding me inflexible, he at last ordered the sailors to convey away the coffin likewise —an order they only complied with from taking the metaphorical phrase I had used, "of a treasure," in a literal sense. Attached to lord Leicester beyond mortality, I always felt protected when he was present, and with ceaseless care watched my deliverers, convinced they would be but too ready to leave so great an incumbrance behind.

They bore me with swiftness to the banks of the Seine, where a boat waited, and the tide favouring, we soon reached a ship of considerable burden, which weighed anchor immediately. Agitated with a thousand remembrances, that of Mortimer hardly occurred to me till the vessel was under sail, and I still perceived him on board. I had ever understood he was to leave me as soon as I was placed in safety,

and reminded him of this promise—"I will leave you, fairest of women," cried he, eagerly grasping my hand, "when you are placed in safety, if you still are cruel enough to desire it. But can I quit you now, or venture to set foot in a country where I have for your sake violated the most sacred law, and exposed myself to condign punishment?" I should have found reason enough in this answer, but that his stifled, short-breathed joy, his ungovernable ardour, impressed my secret soul with terror, and robbed freedom of all comfort.

I found in the cabin to which I was conducted, a woman allotted to attend me, who strongly recommended that repose my fate had long denied; the misfortunes from which I had escaped, united with those that still threatened me to occupy my whole soul; and willing to avert the fearful anticipation, I entered into some common discourse with my attendant. I found, with infinite astonishment, that she was a midwife, and provided with every necessary for the expected babe. I should

have considered this as the most tender obligation, had not a fatal doubt sprung up in my heart, which suspended every generous emotion. Alas! it soon matured into certainty. The vain and eternal fondness which made me insist on having the coffin of lord Leicester placed in the cabin allotted for me, at first seemed to inspire in Mortimer that horror common to weak or guilty minds at sight of such an awful memento; a few days, however, rendered it familiar to him. A passion he no longer concealed led him continually into my presence; neither the unburied dead, the black which seemed to envelop my withered heart as well as form, nor the sad circumstances in which I was widowed, any longer operated on his imagination; I too plainly perceived that he considered me as his own, and only waited my recovery to avow his unwarranted pretensions. What dire vicissitudes of fear did my timid soul experience! I saw myself entirely in the power of this man—forlorn of every human aid, hopeless, helpless, save in the mercy of the Almighty.—“ Oh, thou Su-

preme!" sighed I, hourly raising my streaming eyes to heaven, "thou whose omniscient breath rolls on this mighty world of waters! oh, grant that they may prove my safety or my grave!"

A little gallery ran before my cabin, whither I sometimes went for air. Devoured with reveries like those recapitulated, I one evening found them interrupted by the voice of a woman singing; the elegance of her manner, and the sweetness of her tone, convinced me it could not be my coarse attendant, nor did I know the ship contained another female save myself. Wrapt in astonishment and curiosity, every sense subsided into ear; I recognized a favourite hymn—a hymn so swelling, solemn, and sublime, that my charmed sense pursued the subject almost to heaven. She changed to death; one tone, one deep, one dirge-like tone, struck on my vibrating heart, and almost silenced every pulse. A loud cry, with the name of Rose, burst from me; the noise of a person falling succeeded, and the singing ceased. I ran wildly up to the deck, and

loudly demanded my dear lost friend of the astonished Mortimer. Confused beyond the power of deceiving me, he opened a cabin immediately over my own. Ah, with what tumultuous emotions did I raise the much-loved, much-lamented partner of my fate! Slowly she recovered from the stupor surprise had occasioned—a thousand remembrances endeared the pleasure of the reunion—alas! as many annihilated all sense of pleasure. Embraces and tears at length subsided. As soon as alone, I questioned her concerning the interval, the dire decisive interval!—“Waked by the universal confusion,” said the fair Rose, with bitter sobs, “which succeeded the fatal accident of the night that parted us, I demanded you, my friend, with frantic ardour, but in vain. A man, I soon understood to be the son of lady Mortimer, who was concealed in the house when we arrived, shortly after entered my apartment, and ordered others who attended him to convey me on board the ship which brought him from Jamaica. Tears and entreaties were fruitless, and in the dead of

night I was conducted to the banks of the Seine, and rowed to this vessel, in which I found myself imprisoned, without the least hope of meeting you. I soon learnt, from the coarse jests of the sailors, that their owner was an unprincipled villain in all respects, and more especially where women were concerned ; every hope of an escape was finally taken from me, by my having the ill fortune to attach the captain, whom fear of Mortimer alone has kept within bounds. I understood the vessel was bound for Jamaica, and only waited to take in a new cargo ; nevertheless, I saw that completed without our setting sail, and hoped from this the hand of Providence would yet interpose in my favour. Alas, little did I imagine that it was involving you in the same hopeless, desperate situation !—Judge then, oh *most unfortunate*,” concluded the amiable Miss Cecil, “ what fate awaits us both ! Rescued from the licentious wishes of your cousin, his worthless heart has only exchanged its object, and resigns me as the more ignoble prey to his more worthless companion ;

the little decency Mortimer has hitherto preserved towards you, this miserable meeting will finally put an end to. He now knows you are infallibly apprised of your destination, and how will you form your mind to it? The island to which we are bound is yet in the hands of a few settlers; power is almost their only law, and he doubtless does not want that, since he ventures to defy every other. Never more shall my aching eyes discern the safe, the pleasant shores of England, those shores they joyed to lose sight of. Alas, they then were fixed upon an object, offended Heaven has punished me by claiming!"

How—how should we resist the numbing power of desperation, did not the sacred sense of devotion mostly spring from it, and lift the soul above humanity? Although more deplorably circumstanced than my friend, by a courageous effort I resolved to sooth and console her; and gently preparing her tender heart for the fatal object it was destined to encounter, I led her down to my cabin. Ah, what

affection streamed equally from our hearts and eyes upon the cold memento !

Miss Cecil judged too truly, and the infamous Mortimer no longer deigned to veil his views, perpetually shocking me with free and haughty declarations of his passion. It was but too obvious that he knew his power, and considered his intention of marrying me as the most honourable distinction, even at the moment he scoffed at every one custom or nature had established. Miss Cecil was not less importuned by a wretch, rough as the element by which he subsisted, and both so regularly visited our cabin, that scarce could we call it our own, even at the hours sacred to repose. In the eternal conflicts such a situation must cause, despair would too often prevail, and silently, with dubious eyes, we fathomed the abyss of waters on which we floated, considering it as the last terrible asylum.

In the midst of these horrors the appointed period revolved, and nature made her agonizing effort; at that awful moment I lost every sensation of fear, and re-

signed myself into the hands of my Creator, beseeching him to recall the troubled soul which so long had groaned before him, with that of the tender babe, whose first feeble cries pierced my every sense. As soon as my weakness allowed, they gave into my arms a girl, a dear, a fatherless girl, who seemed, at her first entrance into existence, to bewail her unknown calamity. An impulse new, exquisite, unexpected, took possession of my soul; an impulse so sweet, so strong, so sacred, it seemed as if I had never loved till then. Feebly straining her to my bosom, I enthusiastically prayed the Almighty to bestow on her every blessing she had innocently wrested from me, while my fond heart baptized her in its tears. Powerful, powerful Nature! how did I worship all thy ordinations! No fate can be wrought up to such a height of happiness, but some interwoven sorrow chastens us with the sad sense of imperfection; nor any so steeped in affliction, but some celestial ray streams through this frail mansion of mortality, subliming all our sufferings.

While my eager eyes gazed unwearied on my new-born cherub, and traced in her infant lineaments her father's matchless beauty, even till they ached with fondness, fancy pierced through the veil of futurity to unite each grace of person and of mind, and enduing her with all, every human claim upon my feelings seemed condensed, and revived in this new one. Oh, hope! sweet substitute for happiness, whose mental gildings dawn periodically upon the soul, like light upon creation, awakening and invigorating every active principle of being; recalled by thy irresistible influence even from the dark, the dreary grave, each troubled heart arises, and shaking off the heavy dews of sorrow, slowly resumes its wonted habits. The pale converts of experience no longer dare to appropriate the darling object of their wishes, but meekly then receive the appointed pleasure, prepared alike either to enjoy or to resign it.

As thus the maternal tie engrafted itself in my soul, I perpetually endeavoured to impress that of my dear unfortunate friend

with the same train of ideas. Alas, in vain! Rather surprised at finding me sensible of consolation, than disposed to receive it, Miss Cecil gradually withdrew a confidence I did not easily miss, and delivered herself up to that cold and sullen despair which unsettles every principle. Entreaties and arguments soon lost all effect on her. Starting at times from an impenetrable reverie, a broken sigh would overturn all I could urge, while my continued adjurations produced too often a marked disgust. Obliged at intervals to quit the cabin (lest even my present situation should fail to protect it from intruders), and listen to the hateful addresses of her boisterous lover, often did the seat of reason appear shaken in this dear unfortunate on her return, and a vague and extravagant joy would suddenly give place to the deepest gloom and inanity. I saw these fluctuations with horror, and dreaded the moment when a rude demand of marriage should bring her fate to a climax—Ah, not without reason did I dread it! One evening, after a conversation of this kind, I

perceived her more than usually disturbed. Neither my prayers, nor the pouring rain, could bring her from the balcony, where for hours she told her weary steps. I started at last from a momentary slumber on her re-entering the cabin. The dim lamp burning in it, shewed her with a slow and tottering pace approaching the last asylum of lord Leicester; sinking by this repository of her breaking heart, she clasped her hands upon her bosom with a most speaking sense of woe, while over it her fair locks fell wild and dishevelled, heavy with the midnight rain, and shivering to its beatings. The wet drapery of her white garments floated far over the floor, and combined to form so perfect an image of desolation as froze up all my faculties. I struggled for articulation—a feeble cry alone escaped me. She started at the sound from her icy stupor, and glanced her eyes every where, with that acuteness of perception which marks a disturbed imagination, then with a long sigh sunk once more into herself. A second cry, followed

by her name, my bounding eager heart pronounced—she half arose—the motion of her lips seemed contending with the drear silence of the moment, but not a murmur broke it—amazement, horror, the wrings of death, transfixed me. Springing up with ethereal lightness, even while her feeble frame shivered with agony and affection, she fixed on my convulsed features a long, long look, then waving majestically a last adieu, rushed again into the balcony. Unable to move a limb, my harrowed soul seemed, through the jar of the elements, to distinguish her dreadful plunge into the world of waters; a something too mighty to describe or endure came over me, and sense fled before it.

How long it was ere my careless attendant returned to my relief I know not, but a succession of fits, accompanied with dangerous shudderings and a raging fever, seemed every moment to promise me, from the ordination of Providence, that relief my lost Rose had ventured to precipitate. Whether her fatal example, or my sufferings, influenced my tyrant, I

know not, but his persecution entirely subsided; in the short intervals of reason my weakness produced, he condemned his own conduct, bound himself by the most solemn promises to convey me home, and conjured me to struggle for life, if not for my own sake, at least for that of my infant. Alas, my babe! when my cheek felt once more thy tender breathings, I accused myself for wishing to leave thee, and acknowledged the sad necessity of living. My cruel malady robbing the cherub of her natural sustenance, it was with difficulty she received any other, and the proposal he made me, of having her baptized, was readily accepted; that ceremony was performed the same evening. Alas, my precious infant! no velvet pillow'd thy innocent face, no costly canopies preserved it, no noble sponsors with ready arms contended to receive thee, no father's blessings followed that of Heaven; thou wert, alas! given by a sordid nurse to a more sordid chaplain, and by a dim lamp, within a narrow cabin, thy woful mother raised her feeble head to see the child of lord Leices-

ter, a daughter of the house of Stuart, consecrated by the name of Mary.

Recovered a little from the effects, as well as the impression caused by the unhappy catastrophe of my darling friend, I could not fail to adore that gracious Providence with whose decrees she had dared to blend her own, on learning that the insolent captain had, on that fatal evening, by a fall broke both his arms, and lost the power of molesting her. At first this appeared a bitter aggravation, but it soon sunk into my soul, and regulated all my future conduct. Never, ah never! from that moment have I ventured to yield to rashness and despair, but when unable to obey, I have resolved to endure. How severely has this principle been tried! How often, when overweighed by the heavy hand of misfortune, have I been obliged to interpose between myself and my fate, the fleeting form of the beauteous Cecil escaping my helpless will, and rushing uncalled into eternity!

The vain hope of returning to England, with which Mortimer had flattered me

into health, daily diminished; and the alteration of the air united with the discourse of the mariners, to prove that the period of my disastrous voyage approached. I heard the fond, the universal shout, and that sweet emotion sailors only feel at sight of land, agitated every heart but mine. Averse and gloomy, I turned my hopeless eyes towards a shore where nature's lavish hand had spread a fertility, which seemed to scorn the aid of art.— “Ah, where are now the barren hills, the chalky cliffs of England?” sighed I in silence. I perceived St. Jago de la Vega; and in the idea of interesting the governor I rested my last hope. I knew not, that eager to possess the abundant conveniences my tyrant had brought over, I should escape the notice of the inhabitants, or be considered as living lumber not worth inquiry. Confined within the narrow bounds of my own cabin, I had the mortification of hearing the cannon and music proclaim the arrival and departure of the governor and officers, after partaking a sumptuous entertainment; and on the same evening,

while intoxication secured the chief people of the island in their own houses, I was landed, and put into a litter, which the slaves of Mortimer bore towards his plantations. The few idlers whom curiosity drew round me, disregarded my adjurations, and with cold insolence examined my features. Their remarks were made in a language I did not understand, and I plainly perceived they did not wish to understand mine. I too late recollecting my being unveiled might make them form a false judgment of my character. Meek by nature, and bowed to the earth by misfortune, I lost all power of contending with my fate; and supplicating only the Almighty, awaited its dire completion.

I perceived it was not without reason that Mortimer had boasted of his authority: with overbearing insolence he now demanded my hand, and bade me remember he was there a sovereign, nor did I see a being who dared even to murmur at his will. He presumed to rally the anguish he occasioned, and even sacrilegiously to insult the cold remains of that adored hus-

band, whose rights he seemed every moment ready to violate. Imagination had long since been exhausted in seeking means of redress. Flight was impossible, in a country where I neither knew the roads, the natives, nor whether it supplied an individual willing or able to protect me. Many of his Spanish domestics I was not permitted to see; those that were allowed to approach me appeared haughty, repelling, and silent. I soon found that they compounded with their pride for the servile exactions of duty paid to him, by lording it equally over his slaves, who, timid by nature and subdued by cruelty, seemed to have lost the very wish of any other good than that of existence.

Tears, sighs, and refusals, could no longer avert or even delay the sacrifice; and having only a few hours of solitude allowed to prepare my mind for the ceremony, I hushed my smiling babe at my throbbing breast, and wearied alike with misery and prayer, dropt into a slumber. A dream represented me in the position I really was;

—sunk on the ground near the coffin of lord Leicester. Suddenly I perceived the lid was removed; I started up, impatient to behold the chosen of my heart; I saw him once more, though wrapt in the garments of the grave—once more I saw rich life mantling on that manly cheek, and those fine eyes mine never beheld without pleasure, once more beamed brightness upon me. Surprised, entranced, I made a thousand ineffectual efforts to speak, and holding out my new-born Mary, I saw (oh sweet, though vain delusion!) a father's arms enfold her. My senses seemed unequal to the ecstasy: impenetrable darkness spread over my eyes, and a burst of ethereal music absorbed every faculty; recovering all, however, instantaneously, I looked upward. Alas! lord Leicester was ascending with his daughter in his arms. I demanded her with agonizing cries, and catching at a mantle which yet seemed within my reach, it fell upon me like the crash of nature, burying me under an immoveable weight—I awakened at the moment—'Tis but a dream, cried my scared

heart, but such a dream as the horrors of the approaching moment alone could counterpoise..

Scarce had I recalled my shook senses, when Mortimer, attended by his chaplain and domestics, entered my apartment; while the latter were decorating it with Catholic pomp, I summoned the small remains of my courage to address the priest, who stood ready to mock the religion he professed.—“ By that awful God, to whom you are consecrated, hear me, father!” cried I, sinking at his feet, “ and oh, that he may graciously impress upon your heart the sad protest of mine! By barbarous hands at once widowed and betrayed, it is no longer possible for every human power combined to make me happy; you—you alone, may make me wholly miserable. If to complete those manifold evils which the Almighty (for ends I cannot judge of) has permitted me to survive, with the violation of every right, both of religion and morality, can be called marriage, and you, as the delegate of Heaven, dare sacrilegiously to pronounce the ceremony, I stand.

here a devoted wretch, the hopeless, helpless, victim of my duty ! But mark, I adjure you, my last declaration. I have a will, which circumstances can neither alter or bend : delivered up to this abandoned man, it is in his power to make me anything but his wife, and against that title my soul will ever revolt, and my last breath protest." — "Unhappy, deluded young creature," returned the sordid priest, in French, "were my conscience to prevent this marriage, it would be from a different motive than those you adjure me by ; and such is the horror your obstinate heresy inspires, that did I not hope time and a better husband's cares would convert your erring heart, hardly should I venture to unite you with a member of our holy church." — "Submit yourself at once to your fate," imperiously cried Mortimer, "for to end your hopes of the church's interposing in your favour, I will frankly acknowledge she put you into my power." I turned my hands, as well as eyes, in speechless astonishment towards heaven. "Hope not, my fair cousin," rejoined he

with a malicious smile, "your sentimental innocence can cope with the arts of a sisterhood of nuns; wearied with your obstinacy, fearful of your escape, they gladly resigned you to me to ensure their own safety." He paused—my mind took in at once the dreadful truth. "My *innocence*—ah! rather say *ignorance*," groaned I mentally, "that fatal error which ever too severely punishes itself!" Hardly could I pardon myself the extravagant credulity.—"Scarce was my mother able to persuade me," resumed he, "that you would be duped by so obvious a collusion, since a single moment's reflection must have convinced you, that never man pervaded the last retreat of disappointed women but by their own connivance, and all the precious mummery of the business but heightened the pleasure of the triumph. How could I fail to smile to see the breathless spouse borne in the train of a living one, who proudly clasped a timid heart which knew not then it throbbed against its master's?" Alike unable to utter or suppress the burning indignation this unmanly boast, this

elaborate wickedness, excited, I fixed my eyes inflexibly on the coffin of lord Leicester, almost believing Heaven itself would effect a miracle in my favour, by renovating my only protector. The ceremony nevertheless commenced, when a new event transfixed not only me, but every person present. A yell, wild, deep, shrill, and horrible, was succeeded by a tumult universal and tremendous. The paleness of death crept upon the cheeks of my late inhuman tyrant, who, with his confederates, turned around his hopeless eyes for some instrument of defence in vain. Impelled by desperation, they all rushed out, but were instantly driven back by the tide of exasperated slaves. Appalled by their ferocious eyes and bloody hands, I sunk into a swoon, but revived, as it were by Heaven's appointment, to see the last, the deadly blow given to Mortimer, who, reeling a few paces, groaned his last on the coffin of lord Leicester, thus signally and memorably avenged. Surrounded with death in every horrid form, I expected continually the completion of my destiny;

which I had certainly found, but that a Spaniard, who was united in the plot of the slaves, with the gallantry incident to his nation, protected me, in consequence of my sex and wrongs, and led me away to their rendezvous, assuring me I should there be in safety. Terror almost annihilated my faculties, as the ferocious slaves ran backward and forward, heaping in their huts the bloody plunder new murders every moment secured. Having gathered together all they thought expedient to save, they loaded the horses, and each other, hastening to secret themselves in those woods, which by narrow passes led to impenetrable retreats in the mountains. Many were the unintelligible disputes concerning me. Many an half-raised arm and inflamed eye glared death upon me; but the stroke was as eagerly averted by the interposition of the generous Emanuel. Yet perhaps his utmost exertions had been unequal to the occasion, but that one of the slaves they called Aimor seemed suddenly won over to my party. He was among the ringleaders of this conspiracy,

and his decision silenced every murmur. Horses were so precious, that Emanuel could only procure me one by resigning to his confederates his share of the plunder, which it had been allotted him to convey.

Fury now began to give place to fear, and the guilty wretches hastened their departure. The march commenced about midnight. Silent, bewildered, awe-struck, I had meditated on this succession of terrible events, without extending my views beyond the present moment, and scarce dared look towards the future. To see myself and infant led away thus suddenly into slavery, by a wild and unknown people, seared by the oppressions of their murdered master to all sense of humanity, through a country alike wild and unknown,—exposed to the insults of two new-made lovers, and only safe in the guard they kept over each other—how strange the transition in my fate! I yet bent my soul to the Power, who, by such exemplary justice, released me from Mortimer, and I thought every other evil less.

than being confirmed his wife, since that alone was without any remedy but death.

Ere we had made any considerable progress in our fearful journey, the rolling clouds became tinctured with a vivid crimson, and my companions were seized with the consternation incident to guilt: Notwithstanding they had used every precaution to conceal their ravages on the spot from whence they had escaped, till out of the reach of danger, some unextinguished spark had caught fire, and extending through the range of buildings, I saw the rich, though ravaged possessions of Mortimer one universal conflagration: The apprehension this diffused through the rest of the wanderers, gave place in me to a nearer and more affecting remembrance. Sad and silent tears streamed down my cheeks, when I considered that the whole riches of his base rival formed but the funeral pile of lord Leicester.— “Farewell! a long farewell!” sighed forth my oppressed soul: “Oh, most beloved! oh, most avenged! whatever fate Heaven shall appoint thy persecuted widow, hum-

bly let her obey the God who so signally interred thee!—Alas! a few hours, and no memorial of thy existence will remain, except that poor babe who feebly trembles to the beatings of her mother's bosom. No faithful hand shall separate the ashes of the injurer and the injured. Yet let me not complain, since the fiat of the Almighty shall awfully adjudge the souls this fearful moment enlarges."

As Emanuel still walked by me, I sought from him to understand the cause of the present insurrection, and the different motives of himself and companions.—"Those of the slaves," said that generous protector, "are, like their nature, wild and various—my own, simply justice and love. The tyrannic Mortimer, whose fate no being will ever deplore, established himself in this island, no less by the favour of Philip the Second, than by marrying the sister of the present governor, Don Pedro de Sylva. In that nobleman he met a kindred mind—mean, mercenary, oppressive, and cruel: in one particular alone they differed—Mortimer was by nature

bold and enterprising---Don Pedro cautious and timid. The enormities of the first, however, always found shelter in the justice of the latter; and Don Pedro, not daring to carry on in his own person that piratical and illicit trade, which alone can enrich individuals in the infancy of a settlement, secretly shared with his brother-in-law the purchase and the profit, while Mortimer was the only ostensible person, had any legal inquiry arisen. The arrogance, cruelty, and vanity of Mortimer, received a fatal increase by the accumulation of wealth, and set him above all restraint. Don Pedro, conscious he was in his brother-in-law's power, ventured not to question, much less punish his conduct. The intervals between his frequent voyages destroyed the peace, and shortened the days, of Donna Victoria, the uncomplaining victim of her brother's and husband's rapacious league. I came with her into the family as *major domo*—a post, which, by rendering me a witness of the brutality of Mortimer, soon turned the disgust he generally inspired into hatred.

I was the foster-brother of Victoria, and attached to her by a reverence so profound, that I insensibly adopted her wrongs as my own. Ungoverned and licentious in every instance, but more especially when women were the objects, force generally was employed by Mortimer where fraud failed to succeed; and those domestics alone held rank in his family, who were readily subservient to his gross and vicious pursuits. My views died with his lady, and I should gladly have quitted him to return to Spain, but that he meanly retained a considerable sum I had been provident enough to save, as well as a legacy Donna Victoria had bequeathed me. Every complaint, or even solicitation for my own, was silenced with the most haughty threats of perpetual imprisonment—a sentence I often saw inflicted for no greater fault. Nor could I hope to quit the island, as the consent of the governor depended on that of Mortimer. The sense of undeserved oppression thus corroded my very soul, and prepared me for

the incident which at last nerved my arm against the tyrant.

“ Meanwhile the base accomplices of his pleasures and his crimes assumed a sovereignty over the miserable slaves, which they exercised till invention was exhausted in cruelty and oppression. In vain my nature shrunk at the sight of calamities I knew not how to remedy. Unable to quit the island, or recover my money, two years elapsed in fruitless and sometimes desperate projects. I saw the persecuted slaves ripe for rebellion, and only waiting a favourable moment to rise and sacrifice their train of oppressors, and though I did not purpose to join the confederacy, I concealed it with a sullen satisfaction till the day which at once determined my conduct. Need I say it was that which brought you thither? When I saw you alike irradiated by innocence and beauty, led into those unhallowed walls—when I saw the tear of misfortune fall on your beauteous babe, like the spring’s chaste dews upon the early blossom, I was persuaded your nature intuitively shuddered at the monster; and I

swore to preserve you at the hazard of my life, nay, even at the moment when hope should be annihilated in your heart. I joined at once in the conspiracy: the hands were ready, the head alone had been wanting. By various artifices I procured arms for the slaves, and fixed the insurrection on the day appointed for your marriage, as that on which Mortimer and his favourites would be wholly occupied, and of course unguarded. The hand of Heaven surely guided all our operations. The various villains have atoned (as far at least as life can atone) for their complicated iniquities. But, alas, madam! I did not sufficiently consider consequences. It is dangerous to arm the enraged and the ignorant. I know, too late, your life and mine depend on a frail tenure, and only solemnly assure you, that while mine lasts, yours shall be safe. The uninformed desperate wretches with whom we are surrounded, are not the simple happy beings injurious tyranny first found them. Inflicted cruelty has hardened their hearts, and the sight of untasted luxuries corrupted them. Their

own wants have increased with the knowledge of our enjoyments, and what they greatly desire, they have learnt to go any lengths to attain. Why should I conceal from you, that your only prospect of safety is the hope of being overtaken, though that to me is inevitable ruin. The fatal fire, therefore, which now these entangling woods almost hide from us, is, of all the wonders of the late evening, the most visible interposition of Heaven in your favour."

The nobility of sentiment incident to the Spanish nation, especially in whatever relates to the softer sex, prevented that surprise so romantic a generosity must otherwise have occasioned. To gratify a request made with the highest respect, I entered into a recital of my own hapless story. Aimor, with jealous care, adhered to that side of my horse not guarded by Emanuel, and being ignorant of the language in which I spoke, depended on his rival for a translation, who, no doubt, gave it every construction the most favourable to his own views. The information that I

was the daughter of a queen ran through the troop, and something softened their ferocity; but soon on that pompous distinction were grounded vain hopes of an imaginary good they were all to derive from me—from me, who was in fact the most helpless and unprotected of all the miserable wanderers.

I pondered much on Emanuel's remark, that my safety could only be ascertained from our being overtaken; but when I considered the desperate state of all the wretches with me, should that happen, hardly dared I hope it. Still we journeyed onward, through woods the stars of Heaven could scarcely penetrate, and when I recollect the frightful wilds and mountains beyond them, in which myself and babe must infallibly be buried for life, how did my heart die within me! But to that fear was added the dread of evils yet more horrible. Aimor, I was convinced, would not want the aid of his whole party; and how could I hope one generous individual would be able to struggle with a tide of combining foes? Nay, even if

Emanuel had the address to manage them all, would not expectations in his own favour, hardly less fearful to my thoughts, arise in his heart? Through the chill windings of the woods, I raised my soul to Him whose eye pervades alike the gloom of midnight and the blaze of noon, and something seemed to assure my sinking spirits that he rescued me not from the horrors of the Recess thus to abandon me. I did not err in that devout confidence. The dawn of day obliging the body to be more guarded in their march, they chose a lone hollow, and halted to send forth scouts and refresh themselves. Alas! I sighed for the poor wretches, who, seduced by European crimes to a dire imitation of them, had wanted foresight to secure the common comforts, which alone rendered life endurable, though overwhelmed with gaudy trifles they knew not how to enjoy.

The temporary calm into which they sunk was fearfully interrupted. The scouts sent out pressed back with immediate notice that they were intercepted, and so

hemmed in, that it was impossible to proceed a mile further. Though by this notice my own safety was ascertained, my very soul partook the misery of my companions. The wretched women threw their arms, for the last time, round their despairing husbands, and bathed them with tears so bitter, as might wash out the stains of blood yet recent. The men thus totally devoted, with a stern and unaltered brow, seized their arms, and resolved to rush upon the broken parties; gracing their own death by making the loss equal to their enemies. Even some of their wives, rendered furious by the occasion, followed with such scattered weapons as they could collect; and the rest, no less tamed, gathered themselves and hapless children round me, as if I could preserve them, pursuing their friends with a cry that might shake the throne of mercy. Aimor and Emanuel cast a lingering eye towards the foot of the tree at which I sat, apparently the queen of sorrow. It was dreadful to make a visible distinction at that moment, and perhaps embitter their

last. Laying my babe upon my lap, I tendered a hand to each. The boon was eagerly accepted; even the savage became humanized; an impassioned tear fell on the hand that shuddered at his touch; while Emanuel, more gracefully obsequious, bowed to the earth, and removing his ardent eye from my face to that of his rival—"Adieu, most worshipped of women!" cried the gallant Spaniard, "adieu, for ever! how many evils does death save us all from!"

During the horrible interval of blood and slaughter, I endeavoured to close my ears to the sound of the firing, which was echoed by the agonizing groans of the wretches around me. The conflict was short, and bands of Europeans soon pierced through those shades where a few minutes had made so many helpless widows. Those guilty but unfortunate women prostrating themselves before the presented pieces, endeavoured, by the most submissive gestures and offers of their children, to assuage the wrath of the in-

feasted violets. I feebly arose likewise, and pressing forward to the apparent leader, astonished him with the sight of a white among the survivors. I exhausted my little remaining strength in soliciting protection for myself and child, and pity for my companions. He heard without comprehending me: his very soul was intently fixed on the scattered riches this reduction of the slaves put into his hands, and neither myself, my daughter, or my fate, seemed an object worth regard. The whole party busily employed themselves in collecting the valuables of every kind, and afterwards taking into consideration the human plunder fortune had once more restored to them, they drove off the female slaves and their children, bending beneath the weight of misery, fatigue, and manacles.

Emerging from the depth of those unwholesome woods through which I had wandered, I lifted my eyes devoutly towards that rising orb, which seems no less to give light to the mind than the creation, and called on the pleasing prospect

of the future to counteract the horrible impression of the past. Restored by this extraordinary means once more to civilized society, my heart acknowledged the charms, the simple, the solitary charm of liberty, and springing forward toward England, overleaped every intervening obstacle. Convinced by fatal experience at once of the fragility of human happiness, and the persecutions to which nature's dearest gifts too often expose us; the bright forms of love, ambition, and glory vanished, leaving no image for my fancy to rest on, but Content. I saw her meek eye lifted to her heaven-born sister Resignation, whose hallowed beams streamed through her earthly cottage, impearling every tear, and my soul sighed after the sad peace of which I found it yet capable. The dear unconscious partaker of my wayward fate, with many an innocent smile, revived my spirits; and devoted to this only object of my pleasure, I sought in her to lose the sense of every other care.

The curiosity I had at first excited among the whole party extended not be-

yond common inquiries; and as I spoke no Spanish, and French was but indifferently understood either by them or myself, I could hardly hope greatly to interest them in my favour. I had made them comprehend that I was a near relation of the murdered Mortimer, but that circumstance, far from interesting, seemed rather to alienate and disgust them.

It was night ere we reached St. Jago de la Vega, where we found the inhabitants universally under arms, and eagerly expecting the return of those sent after the rebellious fugitives. Confounded with those persecuted wretches, unsheltered from the taunts, insults, and execrations of an incensed populace, I found myself yet the victim of angry fortune, and overworn with suffering, dropt senseless at the door of a prison, where I understood my journey was to end. I revived on a miserable bed in a dark room, and without any companions; but conscious of safety, as well as free from guilt, I recommended myself to God, and sunk into the happiest repose

I had known since I passed the fatal gates of Rouen.

A black slave brought me some coarse provisions in the morning, nor did I know till the evening that it was meant to sustain myself and child for the day. It proved, however, more than sufficient, for my constitution, which had hitherto resisted every danger, had now received a shock of the most desperate kind. Racked with intolerable pains through all my limbs, I was sensible, too late, that my own imprudence had added a malady of body to all my mental sufferings. During the last awful conflict, when the offending rebels expiated with life the ravages they had committed, I, in common with the females they had left behind, had thrown myself on the ground, alike through weariness and terror. The unwholesome damps arising from a spot which the sun had never penetrated, stiffened every joint; a rheumatic fever was the cruel consequence. Alone, uncomforted, unassisted, consumed by an internal raging fire, I groaned, I shrieked with intense torture. The starts

and cries of my little one alone informed me that I had done so. I hushed her on a bosom I feared would scorch her; and eagerly swallowing whatever liquid was brought me, had hardly intervals of sense enough to share it with my babe, or sufficiently to provide for her nourishment. The days of this excessive misery were unnumbered; insensibly the fever subsided, but left a lameness happier hours and incessant care could never cure.

When returning reason allowed me to extend my reflections beyond the present evil, I recollect, from the time elapsed, that my imprisonment must be decided and perpetual. Emanuel had told me that the governor was timid, mean, and avaricious. Forgetful of this, I had informed my conductors of the family tie between myself and Mortimer, which rendering me his natural heir, this unworthy governor, I doubted not, had annihilated my claim to possessions he was resolved to appropriate, by classing me with the murderers among whom I was found; and by an arbitrary proceeding (not uncommon there,

if Emmanuel might be relied on, sentenced me at once, unwilling to venture a judicial inquiry. The languor incident to such incessant sufferings, both of body and mind, as I had for a course of time endured, rendered me less shocked and grieved at this than many other contingencies. It seemed in my power to die, and disappoint the malice of my oppressors. It was only to remit a little, a very little care of myself, and my constitution would finally give way. Perhaps I should have delivered myself wholly up to this idea, but that the first great tie of nature still wound round my bleeding heart.—“My fate,” said I to myself, “is fully, is finally accomplished. A sad inheritor of my mother’s misfortunes, methinks they are all only retraced in me; led, like her, a guiltless captive through a vindictive mob, the object of vulgar insult and opprobrium—like her enclosed unjustly in a prison, even in the bloom of life a broken constitution is anticipating the infirmities of age—and shall the similitude end here? No;

let me, like her, extract fortitude from each accumulating injury; and if the will of my Maker shortens the common term of life allotted to mortality, oh, let me come into his presence a spotless martyr! and thou, sweet babe, permitted like the palm-tree to flourish under oppression, surely, for some great end hast thou survived the succession of calamities which foreran thy existence, nor dares thy mother once wish to desert thee!"

The days, madam, thus strangely past on. The female slave I have mentioned appeared every morning; and performing the common offices of life in silence, placed near me the food allotted, and vanished till the next. Imagine not I acquiesced, without attempting, at least, to ascertain my imputed crime; but I found the poor wretch was so totally deaf that not one word reached her, nor did she speak any other language than her own and very imperfect Spanish, to which I was a stranger. Neither could I convey to her by signs ideas I could find no visible object to represent. The tender graces of my

daughter nevertheless operated gradually on the untaught soul of the negro, and I had reason to think she would even have connived at my escape, but that such a measure would only have increased my misfortunes, while thus without a friend, a home, or a hope.

One circumstance continually embittered my mind with distant remembrances; the tower in which I was confined adjoined to the fort, and had one window commanding the sea, the other looked toward the inland country. The cannon constantly proclaimed the arrival or departure of every vessel, and my eager heart irresistibly impelled me towards the window. But it was not for me they came—no hope of release, no well-known face to greet me! Those ships that departed impressed me with ideas yet more painful and gloomy. The arms of England, *distant* England, often enriched every steamer, and my sick soul groaned under the conviction, that I must never hope to view the port, which would restore those mariners (comparatively careless of the advantage) to the local ties of

country, kindred, and friendship—to all that gives charms to existence. Haunted by a pleasure which was always in my view, without being ever within my reach, I could not subdue the killing emotions thus raised in my soul.

The growth of my child alone marked to me the progress of time. Ah, moment! how sweet art thou yet to my memory, when first her little voice strove at articulation! The blessed name of mother at length broke the drear silence of my prison, and hardly the celestial sounds of hovering angels, had I been launched into eternity, could give me a sublimer pleasure. I saw her walk with a transport scarcely inferior. Engrossed by and devoted to this sole object of my eyes and heart, which the gracious Author of universal being permitted her to fill, I no longer repined at my unmerited captivity. Only anxious lest any one should suspect my possession of this invaluable gem, I felt ready to hide her, even when the old slave made her daily appearance. The common raiment with which we were periodically supplied, I be-

came ingenious in fitting to her little form, and by that insensible contraction of our faculties, which extends through nature, although it has been remarked only in the organs of sight, I drew into this narrow bound those fears, hopes, wishes, and employments, which in rapid succession fill up our lives, and leave behind a remembrance that we always revert to with satisfaction, and often conceive to have been happiness.

Fearful, at some intervals, lest the want of air or exercise should nip my beauteous blossom, I devised a thousand little plans to make her run within her narrow confines, and strengthen a constitution born perhaps to trials not inferior to those which had blighted her mother's youth. I held her to the window morning and evening, and found the winds of heaven blew not less pure through iron bars than gilded lattices. Ah ! surely my memory does not err, when I say with the poet, that

*From the children of the first-born Cain,
To him who did but yesterday suspire,*

*There was not such a gracious creature
born;
For nature's gifts she might with lilies
vie,
And with the half-blown rose.*

I was one day holding the dear child to the evening air, her little hands now grasped the rough bars, and now were extended through them, while her innocent tongue beguiled her fond mother's attention, when I suddenly perceived a black woman, apparently of distinction, leaning under an awning, raised at no great distance; and while she talked busily to the slaves who were fanning her, the eyes of all were turned intently on my infant. I snatched her away, with an apprehension the most lively I had for years felt; I even absented myself from the window for a long time; then venturing a glance, without approaching near enough to be seen, I perceived the stranger's eyes were still fixed upon my prison, and the repose of that night was wholly destroyed by a vague fear the next confirmed. At the same hour she returned

again to the same pavilion, and after watching the window in vain (as I no longer dared to approach it), she shewed manifest tokens of chagrin and disappointment. Alas, this was not all! My old negro appeared soon after, and delivering me an unintelligible message, demanded my daughter. I prayed, wept, entreated, groaned to the poor wretch, whose eyes alone, of all her senses, seemed affected by my agonies. After a thousand incomprehensible signs on her part, and resolute refusals on my own, she snatched the child from those weak arms which wanted an equal power of resistance, and left me stretched on the floor, from the lameness I have mentioned.

It was long ere I had courage to approach the window; but collecting every power of mind and body, I at length ventured thither. I saw the darling child seated on cushions at the feet of the woman whose power wrested her from me, laden with toys, and overwhelmed with caresses. This, however, was but a small relief to my maternal anguish, while uncertain whether I had not lost her for ever: nor did my

apprehensions diminish when I saw the attendant slaves bear their mistress away on a covered couch, with my child in her arms. Ah, then my prison became a dungeon indeed! I smote my head against the enclosing bars, and the air echoed to my groans. They were only relieved by the return of my old slave, who leading in my lamented cherub, once more blest my arms with the burthen. My heart rushed so impetuously towards her, that it seemed to extend through my whole throbbing frame. As I surveyed the recovered blessing with added fondness, I perceived that the gentle black I had so injuriously distrusted, had lavishly adorned the tender object of a surprising attachment. Imagine a girl between three and four years old, slight, graceful, fair, and blooming, whose amber locks the hand of nature had twined into a thousand spiral rings, which fell over a loose vest of silver muslin girt with roses: her little arms and ankles were encircled with fanciful bracelets of different-coloured beads; while her hand bore a gilt basket, filled with the fruits of the country. She

seemed a being of another world, descending to bless this. While yet in the arms of her sable conductor, she appeared to me like new-born light reposing on the bosom of chaos. I took the little luxuries she offered, and while indulging a sense time and abstinence had almost annihilated, I worshipped the hand which thus at length relented.

Ah, madam! it is only in the early seasons of heavy visitation we dare to repine; when misery once reaches the extreme, it has always salutary effects. Purified entirely from the vain wants and wishes our pride and our passions for a long time represent as the very essentials of our being, we then set a due value on the commonest blessings, and soon find in every thing an enjoyment.

When I pondered over the infinite and various advantages my daughter might derive, from the partiality of a woman whose authority was great enough to open the doors of our prison, my heart became sensible of hopes in her favour, I had long ceased to indulge in my own; and resign-

ing myself to the prospect, I sunk into a repose which might almost be called happy. A short time habituated me to periodically parting with, and receiving my daughter, always laden with some little present, conducive either to my health or comfort. Our benefactress too very kindly retired to the spot I could command, as if desirous to gratify me at the same moment with herself—and greatly indeed did she fulfil her purpose. I saw, in spite of that fatality which had long hung over my unhappy family, an exertion of Heaven in favour of my child, which encouraged me to hope a favourable revolution at some (perhaps not distant) period: while in the tedious interval, the means of health and comfort were amply bestowed on her, and the latter, through her means, on her exhausted mother.

At some intervals, weeks, nay a month, would elapse, without my daughter's being sent for, by which I concluded some one in still higher authority controlled the actions of her negro friend; though the benefits, in a great degree, remained to us.

—wholesome fruits, better provisions, more agreeable clothing, and a more watchful attendance. I sometimes wondered that the woman who thus generously alleviated our sufferings, never once inquired into their origin ; but having learnt, by painful experience, the impropriety of judging without information, I still flattered myself with the prospect of a release, which at the worst I considered as only delayed, till I could perfect my daughter in the woeful tale of those later events, which thus unjustly confined us.

In process of time, I understood from my sweet Mary's improved accents, that our benefactress was named Anana ; and never did my soul offer up a prayer, in which that name (however unhallowed) was not included.

The total ignorance in which my daughter's mind yet remained, shocked and grieved me. Being wholly without books, I knew not any manner of supplying their place, and could only substitute principles for modes, and instill into her tender mind the religious and moral documents, which

yet existed in my own. I endeavoured to give her an idea of the nature and appearance of books. I every day made her repeat that word a hundred times—I charged her to do so immediately, whenever she visited Anana. But whatever the reason, I saw her apparently near eight years old, without having been able to procure her the advantage, or myself the relief of reading.

Thus innocently and happily employed, I one day saw my prison door thrown open, and the interview so long desired unexpectedly granted to me. Anana entered in mourning. I incoherently blended the dictates of gratitude and sorrow. The amiable Anana told me, in broken French, that she came to comfort me. Charmed to find it in my power to render myself intelligible to her, I related briefly my story, which her complacency assured me she did not half understand: It was with the utmost difficulty I comprehended from her, that Don Pedro de Sylva, the unjust governor, who had condemned me without examination, was at length dead; that she

had for some time past been his favourite, and used the influence that title gave her to indulge her fondness for my child, and lighten my captivity: that it had always been as much in her power to visit my prison as now, but not finding any certain crime imputed to me, and sure if I could acquit myself of the suspicion, she should become warmly interested in my favour, (perhaps to the degree of exasperating the benefactor she might then be obliged to despise), she had wisely forborne to gratify her generous curiosity, and contented herself with bestowing such marks of her attachment, as would not interfere with the rights of the governor, or diminish her own. Finally, that death having snatched away the only person entitled to restrain her inclinations, who had bequeathed her a considerable portion of his wealth, she bestowed a part of it, to obtain from the new governor a remission of my sentence; and having succeeded, now came to assure me, that I was at liberty to return to Europe; for which voyage her friendship would amply supply me with means, com-

pany, and attendance, as it was her purpose to quit for ever a country, where she had lost her only connexion, and seek in another, protection, religion, and peace.

During this discourse, I thought my senses almost failed me. I made her a thousand times repeat the welcome, the surprising intelligence that I was free; and the arrival of her slaves to convey me from the melancholy dungeon, which I believed the day before would at some future one become my grave, alone gave confirmation to so incredible an event. But when I really found myself at liberty—when I saw the varied heavens above my head, and felt the green earth under my feet—when the soft fragrance of the almost-forgotten blossoms indulged one sense, and the sweet sounds of congratulating voices blest another, I wonder I did not expire with the tumult of mingled emotions, this happy moment revived in my heart. I raised my soul to him who gave those senses, and breathed life into the elements which sustain them, and besought him to moderate

my feelings, or condense them all in gratitude.

Blended once more, almost miraculously, in the concerns of this world, I learnt with a thousand sensations no words can describe, that Elizabeth had a few months before paid the debt of nature; and that my brother James, as well by her nomination as the rights of his birth, and the voice of the people, had ascended the throne of England—happily uniting under his sway two kingdoms, so many ages hostile, as hardly to leave a hope of the event which was now without bloodshed fully accomplished. Time, grief, and misfortune, had so far allayed the irritation of my mind, that I blessed the ordination of Providence which thus left my resentment without an object. Higher, happier, and dearer prospects opened before me, and I looked forward with impatience to the moment, when I should present my smiling Mary to my beloved sister, and in the society of connexions so precious, close the remainder of my days.

Alas, madam! I required sentiments

like these to sustain me against the conviction, that the intense heats of the climate had united with the want of air and exercise, to fix the lameness left by the rheumatic fever, and completely debilitate my constitution, which has from that period been subject to a thousand little wearing nameless maladies, that insensibly absorb the spirit of youth, and bring on an early old age.

Anana, actuated by a fondness for my daughter scarce inferior to my own, shared with me in every maternal care, and earnestly besought me to receive her under my protection on our arrival in England, where I had made her sensible I held a distinguished rank; solemnly assuring me that it was her intention to bequeath to my sweet child the wealth she derived from the governor; alike to prove her own attachment, and as a compensation for our long and unjust imprisonment. The state in which she had lived with Don Pedro supplied an objection at which my pride revolted, but that almost instantaneously gave way to principle. I resolved to be

above sacrificing the duties of gratitude and benevolence to opinion, and remem-
bering her untaught mind knew no tie in wedlock but constancy, and perhaps in that instance might vie with myself, I sought, by cultivating the wild but solid virtues of her soul, to bury the remembrance of her former error, and fortify her against any future one. Open to the pure impressions of religion and morality, the amiable Anana promised to become an ornament to human nature—but, alas! a greater power than I could overrule shortened her span, and at once determined for us all. The small-pox, always so dangerous in the islands, broke out suddenly, and swept off hundreds. The apprehensions people of Ana-
na's complexion ever entertain of it con-
tribute, most probably, to render it so fatal. She threw herself into such agonies, that the eruption soon appeared, with the most mortal symptoms. Delirious alike with the dreadful malady, and extreme fond-
ness for my daughter, she called for her incessantly—she strove to break from her

attendants, and get out of bed in search of her. She entreated me, in the most moving, broken accents, once more to let her hear the little angel she could no longer see—to suffer her to give into the dear child's hand the casket she was so soon going to bequeath her. The terrified mother shrunk in silence from such a conflict.—“Ah, what are the gems she will bestow,” cried I, “to that breathing one, herself—all now left of my promised fortunes!”—The dictates of gratitude then prevailing, I would cry, “But can I refuse the last request, however wild and erroneous, of her who preserved the being she now would involuntarily endanger?”—Finding reason ineffectual towards conquering the dying wish of Anana, I acquitted myself to her, by leading to the bed of infection and death my little treasure, with a resignation I could only compare to that of Abraham; and like the innocent he would have devoted; my child was returned to me. The exhausted Anana, considering this with justice as the highest effort of gratitude and esteem, yielded

herself patiently to the will of Heaven, which soon called her hence.

The sincere concern this loss occasioned, gave way to one still nearer—my child sickened with the same horrible distemper, and centered in anxiety every faculty of my soul. It soon, however, took the most favourable turn, and left me at leisure to endeavour to secure the legacy our lost friend had put into my hands. The deceased governor had converted the principal part of the property he realized into diamonds, a common practice in countries where justice is partially administered—nor did the new governor know either their number or value; Anana having followed the directions of her benefactor in hiding a part, and bribing his successor to acquiescence by sharing the remainder. I had now gained worldly wisdom enough to adopt the same plan; and having fulfilled every duty, I joyfully embarked for England, accompanied by several slaves, who preferred attending on me to the precarious blessing of emancipation under arbitrary power.

Ah, madam, how different was this voyage from that already commemorated!—from the fallen tree I then continually watered with my tears, a tender, a lovely scion had sprung up—it flourished in the shade, it blossomed in sunshine—with sweet, with gentle hopes, I bore it toward its native soil. No barbarous hand was now lying in wait to destroy it, no pestilential wind blew from those cliffs which shot their white arms into the ocean, and hopefully invited us to the bosom of peace. Ah, no! a dear, though small circle of sympathizing friends, would receive the forlorn, the widowed wanderer, as one arisen from the dead—would grace my woeful tale with many a lamenting tear.

“My sister too, my darling Ellinor—how perfect, how pure,” cried my swelling heart, “will be our reunion! how will she fondly fold to her generous bosom this dear child of the ocean—this soothing, unconscious fellow-sufferer—this early partner in her Matilda’s wayward fortune!”—Pause, madam, over this fair prospect, and let me rest awhile my weary fingers and spirits.

PART IV.

I STRUGGLED with the sad remembrances indelibly impressed on my heart, when my eyes again beheld the shore of England ; and folding to my bosom the dear offspring of love and misfortune, I shut up every sense in her. Already alive to the anxious hopes and wishes, that so early fracture a being with which alone they expire, my daughter fondly flattered herself with the expectation of an unknown good, and impatiently wished for the termination of our voyage. I landed at Greenwich, because the spot where I could soonest learn intelligence of the Sydney family, as the people who kept the chief inn, I remembered, had been servants to lord Leicester :—but, alas ! I had overlooked the long term of my absence, and the probability that they might either be dead or removed. Greenwich, which I had left the seat of gaiety, empire, and magnifi-

cence, now appeared a dreary solitude. The tide in silence laved the walls of a deserted palace, which, verging to decay like its past possessors, seemed but a gaudy mausoleum. I paused over these fragile memorials of human grandeur, as the boat bore me towards the shore, and half surmised the strangeness that might await me there. I was presently surrounded by a set of unknown faces, and after much tedious inquiry, learnt that my tender friend, lady Arundell, still inhabited her house near Chelsea, whither I dispatched a messenger with a billet. It demanded a welcome for a poor widowed wanderer, and a babe, for whose existence that dear woman was perhaps responsible, as it was wholly owing to her indulgence. I added, I would not venture one inquiry till I had gained fortitude from her presence, but doubted not that I should have as much to learn as to unfold. If, as my flattering forebodings informed me, my darling sister yet survived, I was persuaded, by whatever name she was now distinguished, she would once more answer to that with

transport, and fold to her glowing bosom a weary heart, which had long sought in vain a resting-place; but I submitted the discovery and meeting entirely to the care and prudence of our mutual friend.

I waited not long in suspense, for my messenger hastened back with a billet, incoherent as surprise and joy could make it.—“Fly,” said the generous lady Arundell, “to my arms, to my heart, to my home—they will ever be open to you and yours—I suspend all explanations till I see you.—Ah, Matilda, dear to my eyes will be that lovely face, however changed by misfortune.”

Grateful as this invitation proved, my soul was sensible of a damp and disappointment, from the obscurity cast over the interval of my absence, and her leaving unanswered my inquiry for my sister. I hastened nevertheless to obey the request. The sad meditations which would have engrossed my faculties in passing through London, were continually interrupted by the transports of my little Mary; the varying streets, filled with gay shops, and thronged

with fine dressed people, were a novelty to her of the most charming and interesting nature. Ere I could half answer her inquiry into each new wonder, it was lost in the next, and that chastened pleasure a mother extracts from blending the sigh of knowledge with the smile of innocence, claiming its turn in my agitated bosom, suspended more powerful emotions: but when my eyes rested on the gates of lady Arundell's house, those gates from whence I last took my flight, so dearly accompanied, a pang so pungent wrung my heart, that my feeble sense sunk under it, and I swooned away. I revived, and it seemed rather by the cries and tears of my little one, than the remedies of the servants who surrounded me. My sweet Mary had climbed up the couch on which they laid me, and clasping her arms round my neck, laid her mantling cheek to my pale one, and shed deluges of tears. I comforted her, and feeling my hand pressed by somebody who sat almost behind me, turned, and fixing my eyes on the streaming ones of lady Arundell, I threw myself silently

into her arms, and felt my very soul dissolve upon her bosom. Both were half suffocated with feelings too high wrought, and the presence of my daughter proved a fortunate relief; for drawing me fondly down to her—"Why do you cry, mamma?" said the dear one, "and why does this lady cry? I thought we came home to be happy."—"And happy we will be, my darling," cried lady Arundell, pressing her to a bosom melting in her favour; "who can be otherwise, blest with such a cherub? Can you complain, Matilda, when Heaven has left you her?"—"No, my admirable friend," sighed I, "I do not complain—my reason reproves those tears my wounded heart will not cease periodically to pour forth; this house, this room, even your tenderness, awakens a train of killing remembrances, I have in vain endeavoured to arm myself against. Here—here—even here, has my soul expanded towards her father, with a pleasure of which herself, and this weed, are the only memorials."

The entrance of servants with refreshments suspended a little the agitation of

both; and lady Arundell obstinately refused every kind of information concerning my sister or friends till the next day, insisting that I should devote the remainder of the evening to a minute recital of my own story. The astonishment its incidents every moment excited in lady Arundell, seemed to make it more wonderful even to myself. Having the happy assurance from her that my sister still lived, I gave way to the sweet hope of seeing her, and filled up with her idea a chamber which now appeared more solitary than ever.

My impatience concerning my Ellinor could no longer be restrained, than till we met in the morning, when I importunately demanded her story. The visible reluctance with which lady Arundell granted my request, confirmed my fears of some dreadful catastrophe; and had I not been assured my sister yet lived, I should have concluded her loss the fatal event. our friend feared to acknowledge; but satisfied in this instance; and having no tie which could comparatively interest me, I fortified my mind against the impression of inferior

sorrows, by the deep sense of those I had already survived.

Whatever courage I had collected, I needed it all, when, with that fearful pomp of preparation with which friendship ever binds up the wounds of fate, lady Arundell produced a number of papers, most of which appeared to be written by my sister. I kissed the dear traces of a hand so beloved. Alas ! those sheets are yet by me, and I need only subjoin them.

THE LIFE OF ELLINOR, ADDRESSED TO
MATILDA.

OH ! you much loved, but little trusted, dear sister of my heart ! whom it fondly pursues through unknown climes, where yet perhaps you wander, the victim of a fatal attachment, receive in these papers, if ever they meet your eyes, the greatest testimony of an affection, which, as it was the first my soul became sensible to, so surely it will be the last. Allied to me in destiny no less than blood, (for we were born alike to be unknown except to each other), lo ! I lay my heart unveiled before you, its

passions, its pride, its prejudices—condemn them not, my sister, however they may contradict your own. Estimate duly the silence I have so long preserved, the sacrifices I have made—sacrifices so much the more meritorious, as my soul ever revolted against the mean imposer, and submitted but to you. I knew the delicacy of your mind, and would not add to the weight which hung upon its nobler faculties, by a confidence that might wrong at the same moment your duty. Ah, no! I remembered Williams, and was from that moment prudent, if not happy. Yet as I know too well the horrors of mystery, incertitude, and silence, (for have I not spent ages in vainly guessing at your fate?) let me rescue you from a life of suspense by preserving this sad memorial. Perhaps this astonishing separation will prove eternal! If then my heart no more shall feel the throb of affection it has always given when yours pressed against it, (and something seems to tell me that pleasure shall never more be mine!) receive in this recital a last proof of my tenderness; and,

oh, my dear ill-fated sister, may it mitigate the keenness of your affliction, to learn that you have not been the greatest sufferer!

In one part of this story I must ever have been obscure and insincere, but that fate has snatched away the worshipped object, of whose character we judged in so different a manner. Oh, pardon me, all-gracious Heaven, if my opinion has been erroneous!—Pause here, Matilda, if your rising soul has taken the alarm, and weigh well the love you bear me, for I shall need it all, unless I falsify the fact.

On the memorable day, when Heaven decided the destiny of the one sister, and perplexed that of the other, by presenting to the eyes of both the favourite of Elizabeth, how diametrically opposite were the impressions each took of his character! Astonishing that two agreeing in every instance till that moment, should for the first time differ in so decided a manner! and more astonishing that every following day only confirmed the separate judgments! The darling alike of art and of na-

ture, the eye or mind could demand no more than was comprised in the person of lord Leicester; but here, in my opinion, the charm ended. His heart, not warm by nature, had been rendered in a great degree callous, from its having expanded in the chilling atmosphere of a court. Unbounded in his projects, timid and subtle in his actions, tyrannic in his pursuits, the object he could not govern never long attached him. Ambition, pride, and vanity, those leading traits in almost every character, were in his so exquisitely blended and corrected by the frost of his nature, that they might often be mistaken for nobler passions. You were presented to his eyes in early youth, a finished pattern of beauty, endued with royalty, in the tender bloom of a newly-awakened love. Uniting thus in your own person the strongest powers of charming, with such as were peculiarly congenial to the heart you wished to win, it laid itself at your feet. Oh, woeful moment when it did so, as it entailed upon you all the miseries of a mutual passion without half its enjoyments!—

Alas, Matilda, had you really been adored —yet what could that have done more than severely to aggravate all you were born to suffer?—and as the apparent passion of lord Leicester had to you the charms of reality, I am to blame perhaps thus to represent it; but the season of dissimulation is past, and my tortured heart will utter nothing but truth. So fixed was this opinion of his character, that though there was a moment of my life when my fate seemed wholly in lord Leicester's hands, I could not then enough esteem him to venture his decision. Yet, still a tender pity for your unmerited and everlasting passion should have suppressed this (in your mind) harsh judgment, but that I once more repeat, my own actions must ever then have appeared eccentric and enigmatical.

How deeply both father Anthony and I regretted the imprudence, which introduced into our solitary asylum so dangerous a visitor, it were needless now to repeat. Prudence was for once on the side of passion, and your fate was, by the will of your only remaining guardian, for ever

united with that of your lover. I soon found it vain to oppose the ascendancy he had gained in your affections; and as my own were yet unoccupied, I looked no farther than the present moment, and followed you to Kenilworth Castle without repining. Nevertheless I admired the delusions of love, which in a moment reconciled you to a situation apparently so obscure and abject, and still more that total blindness to your own exquisite perfection, which could make you fancy that low state would ever appear to observing spectators your natural one. What then must be my astonishment to see lord Leicester's love impose such humiliations on an object nature and fortune had placed so far above him, and meanly content himself with monopolized indulgences!

Hardly were we alone, when the presumption of that wretch, Williams, filled both of us with a terror which required an immediate remedy. Every faculty of my soul revolted against the abject compliances your entreaties exacted from me; but even those only served to strengthen the con-

tempt which began to predominate in it. Lord Leicester's return gave us a temporary relief, but his method of getting rid of the villain appeared to me alike unsafe and mean, and the only proper mode of ending our fears never once seemed to occur to him—I mean acknowledging his marriage, which perhaps might at that period have been done, without any great danger of offending Elizabeth, whose withering heart was becoming every day less sensible of affection, and whose vanity was so highly gratified and possessed by the addresses of the duke of Anjou. But it was the *interest* of my lord to break the match with the French prince, and to that golden idol his every passion bowed. We were again left to work tapestry; and when he had succeeded in his favourite project, he suffered the queen in turn to bewail alone the loss of her last lover, and came once more to amuse himself at Kenilworth.

But he was not always to succeed—the jealousy of Elizabeth had now just provocation, and in her sudden arrival at Kenil-

worth Castle, she at last overreached her politic favourite. In vain lord Leicester would have concealed us—in vain he would have represented us as the vassals of his amusement: the scrutinizing eye of the queen, the universal voice of her more impartial train, pronounced this impossible. Reduced to frame a new story, tortured with the conviction that it had not gained credit, he was obliged to aggravate every disagreeable of our present situation, by delivering us unwillingly into the hands of Elizabeth. Alas! my sister, I saw, I understood all this cost you on my account, while not one sigh on your own escaped you. I therefore stifled the painful and proud sensations that swelled at my heart, and ventured into the world under the doubtful and mysterious patronage of the queen, who, better acquainted with the finesses of her favourite than those now nearly allied to him, never for one moment was the dupe of his fiction, though unable to disprove it.

Ah, how visionary seems on recollection our new situation! Seen without being

known, adored without being esteemed, punished without being guilty, applauded without being meritorious, we were all an illusion. Yet while surrounded with spies, and acting for ever under an eye disposed to condemn, ere it could half discover, how difficult was it for us to avoid suspicion and censure! One sole advantage had either gained by converging into the sphere of a court—a faithful friend; though even that blessing was curtailed by the eternal policy of my lord, who would not permit us to confide to his own amiable nieces, the ladies Arundell and Pembroke, any part of a secret which might affect, however remotely, his own safety. Bounded as our conversations must of consequence be, the charm of attachment nevertheless seized upon our souls. Mine allied itself to lady Pembroke, while yours equally inclined to her, no less amiable sister, and each took pleasure in passing that portion of her time with the distinct favourite we did not spend together. Ah! here, Matilda, I approach the appointed moment when the paths of life, in which we have hitherto

treed hand in hand, begin to separate, and every succeeding step bears us farther from each other, till darkness and distance rob the straining eye of its first dear object. In vain each now turns back, and seeks the accustomed way—a thousand various ones perplex the wearied mind, and while the impetuous passions drag us onward, we give to the sweet memory of early youth a thousand fond and hopeless sighs, then follow with trembling feet those ungovernable leaders.

Lord Pembroke's partiality had long distinguished a noble youth, the policy of lord Leicester still kept abroad. I had seen many of his letters, through the medium of lady Pembroke, and my heart had learnt to flutter at the name of Essex ere yet I beheld him. Alas, even while I repeat it, I own the same sensation! Oh, love! exquisite delusion! captivating error! from the moment the lips find pleasure in that word, till they lose the power of pronouncing it, the charm, the inconceivable charm remains: whether cherished by the sunbeams of hope, or chilled by the dews

of disappointment—whether the chosen object is faithful or unfaithful, glowing with animation before our eyes, or seared up in the dark and silent grave—the passion, the powerful passion, asserts its eternal influence, and decides the character where it once has reigned. While I dwell on the moment which called to being this finer and more poignant sense, sensibility, memory retraces its dear emotions with a softness time itself can never extinguish.

Tinctured with the partiality of lord Essex's friends, already acquainted with his sentiments on heroism, glory, and every attachment except that of the heart, I fondly flattered myself the day would come, when he would receive from me that last and liveliest impression which forms and finishes the human soul. I interwove myself insensibly in all his concerns—I deeply lamented the tie of relationship which subjected his actions to the will of lord Leicester, and employed some of the little time I spent with my lord, in endeavouring to bias his mind in favour of the absent hero. Cold and silent on the merits

of Essex, lord Leicester often bantered me on being so sensible of them, and seldom failed to remind me of the family compact which had bound lord Essex to wed sir Francis Walsingham's only daughter; to fulfil which he purposed soon to recall him, and advised me rather to turn my eyes on sir Walter Raleigh, whose talents he pronounced infinitely superior, and whose homage was wholly paid to me. As this was a lover he knew I detested, the conversation generally ended when he was named; but a succession of such discourses confirmed me in the opinion of lord Leicester's selfishness, and prepared me, perhaps, to decide in opposition to it.

Essex was at length summoned to England; he arrived. An idle unaccountable apprehension at once overcame my reason. I was persuaded I could not see him with indifference. I feared the keen eye of Elizabeth, and the colder and more watchful one of lord Leicester. I quitted the court the day Essex was to be presented, and passed it with lady Pembroke. By a singular chance, Miss Walsingham had

chosen to do the same. The party enlarged insensibly as the circle decreased. Essex was the theme of every tongue; and while Miss Walsingham's triumphant eyes acknowledged the implied compliments, my yielding heart received them.—“He is here,” cried lady Pembroke, in the afternoon, looking out of the window, and kissing her hand. I felt ready once more to run away, but that decorum restrained me. Lady Pembroke indulged one of the gay whims which so often were a source of pleasure at once to herself and her friends, and insisted that he should only be told his bride was among the unmarried ladies, from whom his heart must select her. This was an ill-judged project. Miss Walsingham had been contracted to lord Essex in childhood, rather to ratify a reconciliation between the families than any affection. The rigid principles of lady Walsingham had hitherto kept her daughter in total seclusion, and the death of her mother had now given the young lady unbounded liberty. Her passions, naturally violent, had always spurned restraint; but

compelled for a time to submit to it, they marked her character even in early youth with haughtiness. The beauty she eminently possessed soon drew around her a crowd of lovers, which elevating her vanity, added coquetry to pride, and united in her person the strange extremes of sour reserve and unbounded levity. Sir Philip Sydney was the only man supposed to have any interest in her heart; but as he had from the first devoted himself to another, she affected to despise him, and wait the return of her allotted husband, with a resolution to fulfil the contract.

Miss Walsingham seconded the proposal of lady Pembroke, which rather perplexed the rest of the company; and after much pleasantry on the subject of sympathy, lady Pembroke sent for her lord and the stranger. Ah, Heavens! that invincible stranger—born to decide my destiny. His youth had accustomed me to expect to find something unformed and unfinished in his person and manners—how then was I surprised to see the height and majesty of lord Leicester, united with a coun-

tenance no less perfect, while every grace of figure, feature, and complexion, were lighted up by brilliant youth, an air at once elegant and ingenuous, and an expression of sensibility which heightened every charm! I have not half described the dear, the deep impression—I would in vain describe it:—he looked, and I then first seemed to see—he spoke, and I then first seemed to hear. Fearful lest any marked disorder should betray me, I riveted my eyes upon the ground, but they had already borne the image into my heart: I still saw it within, and my charmed sense retained the sound of that voice, regardless of all others. Smiling expressively at lady Pembroke's authoritative order, he kissed the hand she had given him, and dropping it, knelt graciously to me. Gracious Heaven! how excessive was my confusion at this unlucky mistake, yet how exquisite my silent pleasure! The overpowering mirth of the whole party displeased him. Kindly deigning to impute my distress solely to that cause, he

solicited my pardon for having united me in the very excellent jest the ladies were obliging enough to make at his expence; adding, in a lower voice, that wherever parental authority had destined him to bow, he should always remember with pride and pleasure the distinguished choice his heart had ventured to make: then advancing to Miss Walsingham, whose readiness saved him a second mistake, he made her some cold compliment, which awakened every fiery particle of her nature, and passed on to pay the same respect to the rest of the ladies, while his eyes ever and anon returned to me, with that passionate ingenuousness which through life has been his characteristic.

I left him behind and returned to court, glowing with the same ardent passion I had once dared to condemn in you, and flattering myself that he was studying how to break an engagement not ratified by his heart. How sweet were the hours rich with that hope! Ready every moment to acknowledge the truth, and to indulge my passion by reposing it in your faithful

bosom, I found you overwhelmed with tears, apprehension, and anguish, for it was at this very period the cruel and extravagant jealousy of lord Leicester became apparent. Wanting courage to mention an incident remote from the cause of your sorrow, I buried the dear impression in my heart, and devoted myself to soothing a mind so deeply wounded. By a strange transition in my own sentiments, I had learnt fairly to judge of yours, and the increasing similarity interwove our souls every day more and more strongly, though not one word escaped me. Dreams of pride and grandeur, which had sometimes embittered a spirit I will venture to call noble, vanished at once before a stronger passion, which strangely filled up that void in my mind nothing yet had ever been able to fill. I no longer complained of the queen—I no longer thought the court a prison—conforming from that moment quietly to my fate, I centered every wish in one sole object.

I even employed myself diligently in

developing lord Leicester's sentiments; and conciliating a difference both of you suffered alike by, though neither would allow it. Lord Essex, during these conversations, was ever near us, with watchful eye endeavouring to dive into the nature of our connexion, and the mystery of our birth, so industriously buried by Leicester and Elizabeth. The disgust your lord already shewed towards Essex became on these occasions more apparent, and as its cause, I sought by every little distinction to reward that dear lover's patience; a dislike so unjust heightened, however, that I already felt towards lord Leicester, though at the same moment it supplied a still more urgent reason for concealing it than those, which had hitherto influenced me.

The sufferings of your mind sunk into mine, and profiting by the sad example of a passion imprudently indulged, I called myself to account for cherishing so dangerous a weakness, and resolved by a courageous effort to govern, if I could not extinguish it. But, ah, how vain is that attempt when once we are truly touched!

Love, my sister, like the enwrithed serpent, only compresses the heart more closely for every effort we make to shake it off. In vain I turn my contemplations towards the obscurity which had hitherto attended our lives, the dark and mysterious cloud which yet hung over them; love drew a vivid rainbow across it; and every tear due to misfortune fell tinctured with Essex. Ah, wherefore should calamity heighten that passion? Without being able to define the cause, I acknowledge the effect. The heart, for ever active, perhaps then ferments most powerfully, and where love has once found room, every agitation co-operates to its increase, however distinct its origin.

Yet if the weakness of woman could be justified by the merit of the object, the more I examined Essex, the more reason I had to be satisfied. That noble candour which resisted through life the courtly artifice he would neither profit by or adopt, was at this period eminently conspicuous; while his warm heart and polished understanding made him no less the

friend than the patron of genius. Every indifferent spectator admired to see even his youth rich with every promise fulfilled in the riper years of Sydney, and thought sir Francis Walsingham the happiest of men, in being able to match his daughter with either of these distinguished minds. The generous Essex scorned to deceive her he did not refuse to marry; and paying his deceased father's will the deep respect of appearing ready to comply with it, waited the operations of fortune in his favour, and adored me in silence.

At this juncture the camp claimed lord Leicester, and the nobility accompanied him. I shared the mortal chagrin with which you saw him depart in silence, and followed you so truly through all your feelings, that I sought to persuade myself Essex might only want the power to treat me in the same manner. This painful idea operated so strongly as to make me assume a coldness at parting to which my lover was unaccustomed, and which, to own the truth, I did not cease regretting the whole time of his absence.

The dispersion and defeat of the armada restored gaiety and eclat to the court. The fullest reconciliation took place between you and lord Leicester. My heart opened once more to hope, to happiness, to Essex, who now took courage to unfold his sentiments to lady Pembroke. She instantly adopted his cause, and promised to find him an opportunity to plead it. Nor was it long ere she drew me to her house, and telling me, with one of those happy smiles which disposed us to grant whatever she wished, that from the first moment she saw me, it had been one of the darling objects of her life to unite me with lord Essex, who alone appeared to her likely to deserve the heart she had so thoroughly studied; she had therefore engaged her lord to join with her in concerting that mode of introduction which appeared to me so wild a whim. It had fully answered her hopes in fascinating one of the parties, and, she added, she half believed it was not lost upon the other. Fixing her eyes for a moment on my glowing cheeks, she gaily started up to throw open her closet-door.

—“In short, my dear,” cried she, “here is lord Essex himself; allow him to plead his own cause, and when I think I can speak more to the purpose, depend on my interrupting him.” Plucking her robe from my trembling fingers, she ran out of the room.

Distressed, irresolute, and overcome with the arrival of a moment so long wished for, I made an effort to follow her; but using the same means to detain me I had unsuccessfully tried with my friend, lord Essex grasped my robe more firmly. I turned, and not daring to fix my eyes on the graceful form, the fine face on which they fell, I dropt them, and yielded in silence to hear him. How deep, ah Heaven, how exquisite, is the remembrance of that moment, when the name of love first reached my ear, from the only voice which could render it agreeable!—“I will not imagine, most worshipped of women,” said the earl, “I offer you any new homage in thus bending before you. The moment my eyes first beheld yours, my too-ready knees offered up to you a heart new to the passion that moment made eternal. The

highest sense of duty to a father, whose will in all other instances was governed by reason, hallowed even the generous error which induced him to contract me to Miss Walsingham. Destined to resign in the flower of his days every advantage which makes this world dear to man, he studiously sought to secure them all for a son, who watered his pale cheek with the tear of guileless childhood ; and to secure me friends at court, who might supply in some degree his own place, allied me nominally to the politic Walsingham, persuaded his interest alone could counterbalance that of our inveterate enemies, the Cecil family. The event justified this opinion. A combination of circumstances would have buried me in obscurity, had I not had the support and attachment of sir Francis. Thus circumstanced, it would ill become me to reject the daughter of the man to whom I owe my safety and distinction ; but early learning her character, and fearing to trust my happiness in the hands of a girl whose violent temper destroyed her

own, I readily yielded to the pleasure of lord Leicester in remaining abroad ; not without a hope (which time confirmed) that she would in the interim give her heart to some more assiduous lover. I had reason to believe this wish was accomplished ere I ventured to return home. Her partiality for sir Philip Sydney is indeed too apparent for me to think of uniting with her, were the friends of both willing to complete the match ; but as I cannot help flattering myself that the determination of sir Philip will regulate that of the Walsingham family, fain would I learn from your indulgence (if indeed you deign to interest yourself in the fate of a man born but to adore you) whether Sydney has any thing to hope from your sister. Accept in this explanation my excuse for presuming to hover near your secret ; and do not imagine, by uniting myself in it, I seek to intrude on engagements I shall readily yield to, whether I am permitted to understand them or not."

Charmed alike with the accents of that harmonious voice, and the passion it gene-

rously avowed—prepared by the openness of his recital to indulge my natural candour, I delivered myself wholly up to the impulse of my heart; and the implied acknowledgment of my affection, made when I condescended to explain your sentiments respecting sir Philip, lighted up his fine eyes with new softness and gratitude. Insensibly led on to speak of lord Leicester, I recollect at once the error I was committing, and not daring to violate the silence I had promised, I broke off abruptly, covered with blushes and confusion. A long pause ensued. I raised my eyes, anxious and irresolute, to his; chagrin had dimmed all their lustre. He saw the conflict in my mind, and recollecting the superiority of his own character, he conjured me to consider well all I would say, and to believe that confidence would be only a weight upon his heart, which mine should never reproach me with bestowing. His wounded feelings gave a persuasive tremulation to his voice; that, and the delicacy of mind which made him above profiting by the error of mine—the right

a lover instantly acquires over the conduct of a woman who has once ventured to acknowledge her partiality—alas ! the exquisite fear such ever feel at appearing for one moment to distrust the object of their choice—all united to authorize, in my own judgment, that full confession the occasion won from me. The astonishing story of our birth, the secret of the Recess, its discovery by lord Leicester, your subsequent marriage with him, the feint by which the queen was influenced alike to remain silent on every point respecting us, all was fully revealed ; the veil of fiction fell at once, and presented me to him the being I was born. This interesting confidence cemented our mutual passion, and gave such charms to the moment as memory ever returns to with pleasure. I imposed on him a vow of silence and secrecy, till your decisive refusal of sir Philip should fix his marriage with Miss Walsingham, and more fortunate circumstances facilitate our own ; nor could the interval, I said, appear tedious to either, while we were daily permitted to meet, though in public, and read in each .

other's eyes a passion untinctured with doubt, and which every following day promised to sanctify. Essex found too many sources of wonder and pleasure in the mutual confidence, to oppose her he from that moment looked up to ; and we parted so satisfied with the interview, that either would have bought it with life.

Nevertheless I was far from considering Miss Walsingham as the sole obstacle to our union. The politic lord Leicester strongly, though silently, opposed it ; nor indeed without reason. Conscious he had reigned so many years without a competitor in the heart of Elizabeth, he might justly dread the progress of a rival, in whom all his advantages were united, with many he never possessed. Not satisfied with the reputation of beauty and elegance, Leicester ever passionately desired that of conduct and valour, and had given the kingdom but too convincing proofs how unequal he was to the military rank he held. Essex was born a soldier. The rough and generous virtues of that character were joined in him with the polished

graces of a courtier, and the most refined taste for literature. A man calculated to shine in whatever light you examined him, could not fail to alarm all who valued and held the favour of Elizabeth. Add to this, that Essex was naturally bold and aspiring; consequently would retain whatever he once possessed. Such were already the fears of all the favourites of the queen, and who could bound mine, when I recollect'd the dubious fate of his noble father, and the last warning he had given to this darling son?

The sudden and unexpected marriage of sir Philip Sydney and Miss Walsingham, revived those hopes in the mind of Essex I had so long strove to throw at a distance; and with them too revived the vain project of confiding his views to lord Leicester, with whose approbation of them he still continued to flatter himself. Terrified lest such an unguarded measure should exasperate Leicester to his utter ruin, who would ill brook that this embryo rival should cross his fate in *every* instance, and dare to contend with him for a share of those advan-

tages he was determined to monopolize, I exerted the utmost care to charm my lover to silence. Alas! every day made that more difficult. The queen and Leicester, fearful of my finding among the many who professed themselves my servants, one whose views would interfere with their own, immediately allotted me that weak wretch, lord Arlington, for a husband; and, in countenancing his addresses, threw every other lover at a distance; at the same time giving me but too much reason to apprehend, that if ever I was permitted to marry, it must be as a sacrifice to both. Not daring to consult you on a subject I had so long concealed, and on which we must ever think so differently, as well as unwilling to blight the little gleam of sunshine love illumined your days with, I resigned myself up to a gloom which hardly the presence of Essex could dissipate.

A very short time rendered the intentions of the queen and lord Leicester obvious to Essex. His impassioned soul, fired alike with love of me, and disdain of him I was commanded to love, treated lord Arlington,

with so marked a contempt, that nothing but the irresolution incident to weak minds could prevent his rival from making a mortal quarrel of it. Possessed in my confidence of the means to render lord Leicester more tractable, the earl of Essex solicited my consent to insist on that of your lord, as well as his interest with the queen, if he valued the preservation of his own secret.

The tender love which attached me to you alone could induce me to oppose a design of which my happiness was the ultimate object. But convinced that an eclairissement of this kind would embroil me for ever with lord Leicester, and fill your suffering mind with a trouble beyond all those you had already experienced, I consented to see Essex once more at lady Pembroke's; and exerting at that interview every power I possessed over his perturbed heart, to moderate his rage, and soothe his love, till the ensuing campaign in the Netherlands should be over, I promised a steady resistance to every matrimonial proposal in the interval, and to decide his fate on his return. Knowing it vain to hope to actuate him by

any selfish consideration of his own welfare, I buried in my heart its deepest sources of apprehension, and bound him to patience, by a strong representation of the danger to which any rashness on his part would infallibly expose me. Those inflamed passions no other being could ever control were regulated by my voice, and when necessity compelled us to part, I seemed to leave in his arms the dearer portion of my existence.

Occupied by feelings and views distinct from each other, and agreeing only in watching the wind, and sending every wish towards the camp, you and I seldom entered into our accustomed confidence and friendship. I had, however, sometimes the relief of a letter, through the medium of lady Pembroke: by those I learnt your lord still maintained an outward show of civility towards Essex, while he secretly made him sensible of all his power, yet with an art so profound as left him no apparent right to complain. He often reminded me of my promise, and vowed to preserve an undoubted claim to it by still enduring for my sake. Overwhelmed with

anxiety and perplexities, I hardly durst look towards the unravelling of events so complicated, and waited in dreadful suspense the will of Heaven. It broke in thunder over me—the cruel situation in which you soon found yourself—lord Leicester's abrupt and imprudent return on the news of it—the politic construction he gave that return to the sick and doting queen—her sudden resolution to marry him, and the immediate necessity for getting out of her power, which rendered both him and you in one hour miserable fugitives, were incidents so strange, rapid, and unsuspected, that I became their victim, ere I could any way account for it.

The fatal morning of lord Leicester's return, you left him to attend the rising of the queen, which was on that day your periodical duty. I waited with impatience the event of my lord's visit to Elizabeth, in which my own safety, as well as yours, was immediately concerned. A servant of lady Pembroke's, in whom she reposed great trust, suddenly brought me word that a fright had thrown her into premature

labour, and the danger was so imminent, that even while we spoke she might breathe her last ; nevertheless the messenger, in her name, urged me to hasten to her, if I valued the letters I had lodged in her hands. I gave way to the alarm without reflection, and accompanied the messenger instantly ; nor did I meet in passing through the palace any of our women or friends, to whom I could mention the cause of my sudden absence. Happily the danger of my much-loved friend was over ere I arrived. I pressed her hand in silence, and took from it the packet relative to Essex, she had kept ready to give me ; which I put into my bosom, and was hastening back, when a stranger, as I passed through the outer court, presented me a note. The hand my fluttered senses owned for that of Essex. But why should he return to England ? A confused fear arose in my mind, which hardly left me power to read it. It was anonymous, but I learnt from it, " that he had been at the house of lady Pembroke, where, shocked at the distress into which her misfortune had just thrown her lord, as well as

the whole family, he found it in vain to hope their assistance towards obtaining an interview with me, which, nevertheless, was highly essential to the peace and safety of both." He ended with conjuring me to follow the bearer, if I wished to save him from desperation. Perhaps on the decision of this important moment depended the peace of my whole future life. Too surely my compliance infinitely lengthened the fatal absence from court which enthralled me for many painful years; and dearly did I expiate that first deviation from propriety and prudence. But are we always rulers over our feelings? mine were agitated with almost every possible cause, and coward reason too often retreats from the dangerous contest.

I stept into a hired boat the messenger shewed me, which was rowed down the river with the utmost rapidity. During the little voyage I revolved in my mind every probable reason for this sudden and alarming return of the earl; but I was at Greenwich ere I yet had fixed on one. I landed at a solitary garden belonging to

lord Southampton, and was conducted to a pavilion which overhung the water, where I found Essex alone, pale, disordered, and unrest, with every symptom of anxiety and fatigue. Overwhelmed with I know not what agitation, I sunk upon his shoulder, as he knelt before me, and gave way to an uncertain presentiment of sadness, a few hours after so fully verified. Not even the charm of his voice could immediately sooth spirits, so many concurring circumstances had deeply agitated: nevertheless, on comprehending that surmise, and not misfortune, had brought him thus suddenly to England, I felt my oppressed heart breathe a little more freely. I by-and-by understood that the sole motive of this journey was the sudden one of lord Leicester; that by means of friends who surrounded your lord, he had always endeavoured to keep a watchful eye on his actions; and understood that a packet of letters, brought by a trusty hand from England, had agitated him so strongly, as to make him resolve on leaving his command to post home immediately. The

communication of this mysterious resolution determined him to follow the steps of his general, which he was enabled to do, as he fortunately acted only as a volunteer. The impatience lord Leicester discovered during his hasty journey, authorized the fears of the rival who followed his steps, and persuaded him either that the secret of my birth had transpired, or that some manœuvre was projected to dispose of me as policy dictated. Rendered desperate by these fears, he had left every thing in train for an immediate return, if fortunately I was still at liberty; or if he could be the happy means of delivering me, in case the whole truth had been discovered; nor could he longer doubt but I would at last consent to follow the fortunes of a man, who had never for a moment put all the hopes he might perhaps justly form, in competition with the single one of possessing me. The generous error of the earl's conduct could not offend me, but persuaded my own situation was not so desperate as he represented it, I accounted to him for lord Leicester's precipitate journey, by ac-

knowledging the truth, and urged him to leave England directly, that his having visited it might never transpire. But I talked to one who no longer attended to me. His eyes wandered wildly over my features, while his whole soul was engrossed by his favourite project. Possessed and distracted with the idea that lord Leicester would infallibly ruin his hopes by disposing of me, if ever I was again in his power, not all my vows of everlasting love and fidelity to him, nor promises of the most obstinate resistance to every other proposal, could avail.—“ You are gone, you are torn from me for ever, if once these eyes lose sight of you,” was his impassioned reply, a thousand times repeated to all my arguments and entreaties.—“ It is the crisis of our fate, my love,” would he cry; “ yield, oh yield to it! Admitting *you* are proof against trials you cannot guess at till too late, how know you but I may be sacrificed? Sir Francis Walsingham already repents consenting to annul the contract between me and his daughter—she is already widowed; a hint would engage

lord Leicester to favour its renewal (for do not his views coincide with that project?) a word from him would determine the queen in its favour; and a command from her disobeyed would exile me for life. Thus, my sweet Ellen," continued this agitated lover, "you not only put your own fate in the hands of a man, who will never consent to unite it with mine; but even should you have resolution to resist his will, you deliver up to it a wretch you say you dearly love, and who certainly loves you to madness." Bathing the hands he grasped with precious drops of tenderness and anguish, he held them alternately to his lips and heart. What was my distraction at that moment? Inexorably to refuse was the hard duty imposed by my reason, while my soul even melted with fondness. But the fear that I should entail misfortune on the dear choice of my heart; obscure at once the brilliant fortune which seemed to spread before his youthful steps, and track them perhaps with blood; a just remembrance of the severe censure I had passed on your conduct,

under circumstances not less trying; and a conviction that such a compliance would infallibly endanger your safety, made me resolve to act up to my sense of rectitude, at whatever price. I collected these reasons, and many more, which have now escaped my mind, to prepare Essex for a disappointment I was sure he would feel but too sensibly, and strove to reconcile him to the refusal, by convincing him that his own welfare was the chief cause of it. Perhaps in truth it was, for hardly can the sun tinge the dew-drops with more various hues than the soul will cast upon its feelings. I a thousand times assured him, "that to be the sole object of his heart did not give me more pleasure than to see him the admiration of the kingdom. The happy promise of his youth," I added, "had centered every eye and every hope in him. What then would be my grief and disappointment, if the coming years, which ought to crown him with glory, were to bury him in obscurity, or steep him in sorrow? That nature had

formed me with a strength of mind to view every situation in its true light; nor could I comprise all human passions in love, though I thought it, perhaps, the leading one. Fill up the interval of our separation, my lord," cried I, " with a long succession of such heroic actions, as may give to our union, whenever Heaven permits it, the only happiness not comprised in itself—the sacred sense of having deserved it. The milder virtues of my sex shall not be wanting; time, patience, and fortitude, often conquer fate herself; nor will I ever yield to lord Leicester an obedience I do not owe him, though, for my sister's sake, I shall condescend to temporize in instances of less importance. Plighted to you by every tie, the rites of the church could only ratify a claim, which will from this moment make my acceptance of another an adultery of the worst kind. Hasten back then, my dear Essex; conceal, if possible, that you have been absent, and beware how you expose to the eyes of lord Leicester a suspicion of his honour, he would never perhaps pardon." I broke

from his arms, strengthened surely by some supernatural aid.—“ Yet stay, my beloved, my worshipped Ellinor—Oh, yet be persuaded!—you leave me for ever—these aching eyes see you for the last time—never, oh never, shall I now call you mine !” Such were the passionate exclamations which vibrated on my quickened sense as I flew towards the boat, and ordered the men to row to London. My full eyes still sought that graceful form, which, with folded arms and a dejected air, hung over the terrace, and my heart dissolved at the accents which still lingered on my ear. Alas, I knew not then how far they were prophetic !

Such was my conflict, such my determination, during the busy hours fraught with your fate and mine, my sister. The mind, however, soon recovers all its vigour, when it has dared to act up to its duties, and I had wiped away my tender chagrin ere I reached the court. Ah ! let me shorten this part of my recital, lest I rashly pause to question Heaven, why the most merito-

rious action of my life became the cause of my ruin? I reached London, Matilda, two hours after you and lord Leicester quitted it; and fearful of the appearance my long absence might have even in your eyes, did you know how the time had been spent, I resolved to tell you that I had passed the day at lady Pembroke's bedside; and to avoid the inquiry of indifferent persons, stole at the close of the evening through the back courts: thus fatally eluding the watchful care of lady Arundell, who had planted assiduous friends in every other avenue to the palace, ready to intercept me when returning, after she had caused London to be explored in vain to find me.

Ah, gracious Heaven, what were my emotions when entering our apartment! I saw the queen's women and officers in possession of it! The disorder of our cabinets and chests—every thing indicated a dangerous discovery—a terror, for which there is no name, came over me. A joyful exclamation on the part of those into whose hands I had fallen, and a dispatch to the

queen, gave me reason to fear alike for my Matilda. To the inquiries I made, no other answer was given, than that they were employed to guard, and not inform me; and an officer of the queen's immediately appeared to conduct me to her presence. Unable to command a single moment of solitude and silence to regulate my thoughts or actions, the past, the present, and the future, presented only one wild chaos to my mind, which hardly the breath of Heaven seemed able to bring into order. Pale, horror-struck, and speechless, I was dragged like a criminal into the closet of the queen, whose burning cheeks, and enraged eyes, told me in one killing look all I had to dread. My conductors were ordered to retire, and lord Burleigh, with the old lady Latimer, were the only spectators of this dreadful interview. Scarce could my trembling limbs support me, or my sunk soul utter a single word. Death—death in the most terrible form glared upon me. What do I say—death? Oh that I had feared no other evil! Grief, insult, obloquy, all that can add horrors to

the grave, promised to forerun it. The packet of letters, the testimonials of my birth, whatever was wanting to confirm the doubts of Elizabeth, or redouble her rage, were all to be found about me. Matilda, Essex—those forms so dear, glistered before my tearful eyes, and I seemed in this perilous moment to drag down to the earth every human being I loved and valued.

Elizabeth gave way to that coarse virulence which marks her manners. Is there a vindictive or opprobrious epithet she did not exhaust? Lord Burleigh, apprehending that this ungoverned passion would rather *give* than *gain* information, solicited her permission to examine me, which she sullenly granted. To all his artful and insidious inquiries I replied with truth, veiling only such particulars of your life and my own, as malice might construe into a crime; always referring myself to lord Leicester, in whose bosom the secret of our fate was, as the queen well knew, deposited.—“Ah, ah! then, traitress,” cried Elizabeth, no longer able to contain her

rage, her very eyes flashing fire, " so thou wouldest artfully feign ignorance of thy detested sister's marriage with that villain thou glossest over so rarely ; that information, I thank him, he has thought proper to give me under his own hand (pointing to a paper lying on the table near her) ; take that truth from me, and now unfold the rest, or tortures shall wring it from thee."

She continued to speak, but I had ceased to hear—breathless, mute, astounded, my feet seemed to take root on the spot where I stood, and my tears alone proved that I was not marble. Lord Leicester's marriage acknowledged—authenticated at such a juncture—and by himself too—Heavens, what a chaos did this news make in my mind !—" Speak, Jezebel !" exclaimed the exasperated queen, in a tone almost as inarticulate through passion as mine was through fear; " thou art still in my power—though the perfidious villain I had raised from the dust, and loaded with benefits—though he, I say, and his minion, have escaped my vengeance, thou art yet within

my reach—tremble lest thou shouldst answer, shouldst suffer for all."

Alas! her utmost rage could hardly have added a pang to those which at that moment overwhelmed me. Another killing truth had unwarily escaped her—lord Leicester himself then thought there was no safety but in flight—he was gone, and my sister, it was plain, had accompanied him—both had surrendered me up a hopeless, helpless victim, however unoffending—even tears, as well as language, now failed me, and my brain shot through with fire. Oh, Essex, in this moment I yet remembered thee! Thy last words yet rung in my ears, and my soul struggled with the deep regret I felt for having scorned thy project, through a vain—vain generosity. Elizabeth finding threats and interrogations alike lost on a girl, whose absent senses seemed to have wholly retired into her heart, now gave way to one of her violent transports; she threw a large book of devotion which lay by her on the table, with so good an aim, that it struck me on the temple, and I sunk senseless to the

earth. The attendants were all called in, and my laces cut, as if I had fainted, the queen not choosing to avow a resentment so grossly expressed. A ribbon, from whence hung the dearer part of my existence, those testimonials of my birth, which were one day to fix my rank in life, attracted the eye of Elizabeth. The ready attendants disengaged and presented them to her hand, together with the packet containing my correspondence with Essex. I was insensibly reviving when she perused the first, but surely that moment half avenged me. Never did mind or body undergo a greater revolution—rage evaporated at once—surprise, grief, confusion, silence succeeded; with a face pale as my own, trembling hands, and failing eyes, over and over again did she examine the incontestable proofs of so surprising an event; then wildly glancing over my features, she tore the papers into atoms she never thought small enough.

During this interval I had so far recovered myself as to be capable of speaking;

but scarce had I uttered a sound, ere she started in her turn, afraid to hear—"Take her away on your lives," cried she, in a broken and inward voice—"convey her into my little closet, nor let one soul see or speak to her, as you value my favour." The servile slaves of her will executed this order with the utmost alacrity, and the room was guarded by two officers, who took from me every means of escape or death. Alas! I thought not of either. Yielding to the desolating flood which had in one hour encompassed me, I braved the future. Betrayed, delivered up by lord Leicester—neglected, forgotten by my sister—the pair for whom alone I seemed hitherto to have lived; had fate another blow in store? Yet even if so, it must sport with human misery to level it at me, when those already given were mortal. A stern and sullen despair succeeded the keen vicissitude of emotions which had marked the last hour of my life; I considered myself as the devoted of Heaven and man, and resolved to oppose a heart ren-

dered callous by injury to every future stroke of fortune.

Elizabeth forgot not her usual policy even while overwhelmed with surprise; the room in which she had ordered me to be confined had another door, which led to private passages through the palace, and from this entrance a guard approached at midnight, and informed me it was the pleasure of the queen that I should follow them. I obeyed in silence; and getting into a litter I found at the garden gate, inquired not even my destination. I travelled, almost without resting, for two days and a night; care having been taken to provide relays, which were every where ready. During the first day's journey a guard attended; but all prospect of my being released by human assistance then ceasing, I found myself delivered into the charge of lord Burleigh and his servants. My deep perturbations began now to subside, and my soul inclined to its wonted habits; though to have been betrayed by lord Leicester and my sister, was a recollection my wounded feelings had not yet

courage enough to cope with. Alas, how should they ! When the passions are permitted to decide our conduct, however heroic it proves, we claim not those returns reason tells us are due to every instance of virtue, which had no other incentive than reason.—“ Ah, Essex ! dear, prophetic Essex ! ” sighed my heart at some moments, “ why—why did I inexorably reject thy generous proposal ? That ungrateful sister, to whose safety I sacrificed the sweetest hopes of my life, manacles thy devoted love, and flies far away to take shelter in that country I dared not seek even under thy protection.”

At the turn of the night, a dreadful storm of thunder, lightning, wind, and rain, broke over us ; and the terrors natural to my sex on such occasions were doubled, on finding that the whole party were set on by banditti. A moment before and I should have affirmed I had nothing to dread, yet so lively was my new fear, that even the vengeance of Elizabeth became a trifle in the comparison. The servants of lord Burleigh made a desperate but vain

resistance ; and the whole were at length led away by the ruffians into a wood ad-joining, where all, no doubt, like me, ex-pected to be murdered. The storm now began to abate, and the moon sometimes forced its way through the volumes of black clouds which yet hung over it. My quickened senses caught its transient gleams, to examine if any habitation or other hope of rescue was in view. In vain I strained my sight. The wood involved us entirely, and every feeble hope died away, when my eyes suddenly rested on— ah, gracious Heaven!—our own Recess. Yes, the well-known entrance of the tomb presented itself, and a thousand vague ideas of safety and danger mingling in my mind, as the robbers approached the litter to take me out, I screamed and swooned away.

Alas, my sister! call to mind your own feelings, and guess at mine, when I once more opened my eyes in the great room of our Recess—that room once hallowed with the prayers of father Anthony and the pre-sence of Mrs. Marlow—that room where

once the portraits of our parents smiled peace and security on their now desolate offspring—how hideous was the change!—its bare walls now grimed with a thousand uncouth and frightful images, presented only a faint picture of the present possessors, on whose hardened faces I dared not fix my fearful eyes.

Considering me but as accidental plunder, they were wholly engrossed by the old lord Burleigh, in whom some important view seemed to centre. I shrunk from the terrible scene, and called upon the awful shades of those most dear to me, to appal in turn the desperate wretches who made the time-struck walls resound with threats and execrations. My shocked eyes sought the ground as a relief, and fixed upon a well-known object—it was the ring of Mrs. Marlow, with which father Anthony wedded you to lord Leicester, and well I remembered that ring was on your hand when last we parted. I stooped impatiently for it—my senses more fully recognized its setting. The dreadful truth flashed upon my mind.—“Alas! my sister

and lord Leicester are alike ensnared," groaned I forth, without any consideration—" well I know they must be here—oh, in what dungeon have you hid them?"—" Your sister, fair lady !" returned one of the villains with an odious grin: " comrades, our captain will thank us for this prize; this must be she he talked so much about when the other travellers threw themselves into our hands. Make yourself easy, mistress; your sister is locked up as safe as cords can keep her."

All the anguish I had before felt became nothing at this moment.—" My sister in this dungeon !" cried I. " Oh, born to suffer with me, dear Matilda, how will that soft frame, always unequal to the trials of life, and now entirely debilitated, support these horrors? Alas, sirs, if there is yet in your hearts one touch of human pity, conduct me to this tender sufferer, and let her die in my arms."—" All in good time, young woman," replied another, with an air so surly as awed even my convulsed soul to silence.

Lord Burleigh still was their great ob-

ject ; threats and oaths were exhausted on him, when, to consummate the terrors of that moment, the name of Williams reached me. That name, expounding both the past and future, wrought my fears up to frenzy. I cast my wild eyes around in search of any means to die, and could in that terrible moment, like Portia, have swallowed fire, when a tumult without the room at once suspended that within it. The sound of pistols, the precipitate entrance of such of the robbers as were not already round us, followed by many unknown persons, instantly convinceed me that Heaven had delivered us from our oppressors, by some means less shocking to humanity than those despair had filled my thoughts with. A dreadful contest ensued ; but our deliverers prevailing, immediately began to unbind lord Burleigh, who, almost mute with excessive surprise, found in them a train of his own domestics from the adjoining Abbey of St. Vincent, which I understood was now one of his seats. Nor was their amazement less at meeting with their lord in this newly-discovered den. I com-

prehended the whole in a moment, and plainly perceived the servants of lord Burleigh must have come through the subterraneous passage that communicated with the Abbey. I recollect that it was unknown to Williams, and flattered myself that you and lord Leicester had escaped through it. Overwhelmed with the blessed events comprised in this deliverance, I forgot I had any thing still to fear; and not considering lord Burleigh as my keeper, I saw in him only a fellow-sufferer. I rose with alacrity, and led the way to the dungeon which communicated with the Abbey, those who newly came from thence following me in silent astonishment. I perceived the cords with which you and my lord had been bound, and demanded you of the servants with a joyful impatience. Lord Burleigh learnt from my incoherent transports a circumstance I had refused before to inform him of, that chance had imprisoned us in the very spot where you and I were bred. Wholly taken up with my own exclamations, and regardless of the silence of my followers, I

hailed the entrance of the Abbey, so long our happy asylum. Ah, Heavens ! how cruelly were these lively emotions repelled and extinguished, when, by the command of lord Burleigh, his servants once more seized me as a prisoner, and attempted to lead me towards a remote apartment ! With a heart humbled and broken by so many successive frights and afflictions, I sunk at his feet, not disdaining the most submissive attitude, and only solicited to see you. I reminded him of the dangers he and I had shared together, and conjured him to remember you alone could have opened the passage which led us all to freedom, unless he basely resolved to become to me a murderer as dreadful as those from whom we had just escaped. Inexorably cold, he replied, " that my unguarded acknowledgments only gave him stronger reason to imagine much was yet concealed ; and that whenever I would resolve to be wholly sincere, I should not want his interest with his royal mistress." Breaking from those trembling hands which every moment more enfeebled, he ordered

his servants to bear me into the grated room at the end of the eastern cloister. You cannot but remember the dismal place. Half sunk in ruin, overhung with ivy and trees of growth almost immemorial, it appeared the very cell of melancholy. Alas! her pale representative took possession of it in myself. The massy bars no sooner gave assurance that I was imprisoned, than my conductors impatiently flew to rejoin the rest, and learn the news of the family. To me that small relief was barbarously denied. So near the cause and partaker of my sorrows, they were destined to flow in solitude; nor could imagination decide whether you were yet enthralled, or had again escaped. How terrible are the vague suspicions of an impassioned mind when deprived of every means of certitude! The pale gleams of the moon seemed every moment to people the dungeon they glanced through—my pulse beat with redoubled strength and quickness—the whole cloister resounded the long night with distant feet, but they came not to me. Fearfully I often started when sinking into a lethargy,

rather than slumber, by the echo of some remote voice which fancy continually told me I knew; but it always died away ere memory could assign it an owner; and though my fertile brain exhausted possibility, the dawning day realized no other objects than those dreary ones my chamber presented. The bats and owls began to retire to their haunts in my neighbourhood, and the short visit of the rising sun only shewed me the narrow limits of a dark and dismal room. By this time both mind and body were alike exhausted, and a mist appeared to envelop my senses, which still recall a thousand fleeting forms, by turns surrounding me till fatigue threw me into a deep sleep.

It was at length interrupted by a maid who brought me breakfast, and a message from her lord—"that if I would inform him what was wanting to my comfort and accommodation, his orders should immediately supply it." I cast my eyes expressively around, and bid her tell him in one word—"every thing." The woman seemed affected: I snatched the fortunate mo-

ment, and putting my purse into her hand, asked in return only to know the fate of lord Leicester and my sister. I learnt, to my inexpressible relief, both had, by some incomprehensible means, again escaped, and that lord Burleigh's generous daughter was confined as their abettor. A hasty summons to the maid left me once more alone; but the news she had communicated, and the idea that the amiable Rose might hereafter be alike ready to relieve my distresses, gave a new turn to my spirits, which now gathered courage to retrace the past, and look into the future.

Although unable to comprehend what the urgent motives could be, which impelled lord Leicester and my sister to so precipitate a flight, every thing implied that they were desperate; for that it was sudden and without preparation, their intention of taking shelter in the Recess strongly indicated; and whenever I recollect the dangerous situation of Matilda, I shared with her that compassion self is but too apt to engross. Was there a spot of St. Vincent's Abbey, however gloomy, which

did not call to my mind some instance of that integrity, affection, and nobility of heart, which distinguished my Matilda? and could I remember these, yet doubt that by whatever chance I was deserted, your will could have no share in it? Believe me, my sister, the first prayers I addressed to Heaven in my prison were for your safety.

When time and solitude restored me reason enough coolly to consider my own state, I saw no immediate danger it could teem with. Though a victim to the fears of Elizabeth, and the policy of lord Burleigh, I had not yet learnt to consider them as mere murderers; and if they were not so, imprisonment was the only evil I could have to apprehend; nay, even that might perhaps be short, as it was undoubtedly both illegal and unjust. Malice itself could affix on me no other crime than that of being daughter to the queen of Scots—a fatal truth which Elizabeth would gladly forget, but surely never publish. Could I resolve therefore to endure with patience the punishment so unworthily imposed on

me, I might in time emerge unsullied to distinction. I called upon the example of her who gave me being to support my drooping spirits, and should perhaps have vied with her in fortitude, but that one cherished grief wound round my aching heart, and often wrung forth its dearest drops. Essex, the most beloved of mankind—that faithful lover, whose ardent prayers, whose generous proposals I had obstinately resisted, when his irritated mind seemed daringly to lift the veil of futurity, and pierce through those complicated dangers which followed our parting—ah! what should guard him, when my loss was discovered, from giving way to his injured and exasperated affection? If fortune should even separate him and lord Leicester, how could I be certain that Elizabeth herself would be safe from his reproaches? and who was ever safe from her vengeance when once thus desperately awakened? The premature fate of my much-honoured father, the noble Norfolk, returned upon my memory; the Tower, the dismal Tower, scaffolds, axes, a bleeding lover, and a

broken heart, daily passed in long array before me, and peopled the solitude to which I was so unjustly condemned.

The decency with which I was attended and served, proved that both Elizabeth and her minister had still terms to keep with me; but the servant who had ventured a reply was impeached by those who waited without the door, and my purse being found upon her, no doubt became a sufficient proof of guilt. Certainly I saw her no more; and the women deputed in her place, were either too guarded or too ignorant to inform me on any subject, had I left myself money to try their fidelity.

I had once been so accustomed to seclusion, that it would soon have lost its horrors had my misfortunes rested here; resolved, however, not to augment them by vain and fruitless repining, I demanded such books as might strengthen and amuse my mind; thus opposing the wisdom of ages to the pangs of the moment. By sharing a part of my food with the birds which inhabited the overhanging trees, I drew round me some mute associates, who, more grateful

than the vain beings that venture to look down on them, are always attached by benefits.

This lethargic tranquillity was soon interrupted by a visit from lord Burleigh. With the fair language of an experienced courtier, he "commended my resignation to an inevitable fate, and admired the wise use I made of confinement, in thus applying myself to enrich my understanding; assuring me that he had exceeded his orders for my accommodation; and by an express which arrived over-night from the queen, had it at last in his power to restore that liberty he had by her command deprived me of." My heart leaped at so un-hoped an alteration in my fate; but he intercepted the transport ere it reached my lips, and sent it back a dead weight into my bosom.—" Think not, therefore, fair lady," said he, " that her majesty's indulgence is unconditional—she wills, that if ever you pass these walls, it is as the wife of lord Arlington."—" They will then be my grave, my lord," returned I, in bitter-

ness of spirit ; "shame on her indulgence, inhuman tyrant!"—"Moderate your wrath," resumed he in the same equal tone. "After your bold attempt to impose on her by forged testimonials of an impossible marriage and suppositious birth, you ought rather to imagine she treats you with lenity."—" *Forged testimonials!*" retorted I with great acrimony—"Why then did she so carefully destroy them? But she destroyed them, my lord, in vain. Look down, blessed spirits of those who once owned this noble mansion! look down, thou dear departed sister of the murdered Norfolk! look down too, revered Mrs. Marlow, thou gentle guardian of our youth! and say to whom we owe our being. But why do I call the blessed from their reward to authenticate those rights the malice of Elizabeth cannot annihilate? Oh, royal Mary, dear unknown mother! how would the tender yearnings of thy bosom justify the assertions of thy persecuted daughter, did not a cruel tyrant, by a double injustice, enclose in separate prisons the mother and the child!—bring us

but together, and you shall find——” — “ I am not commissioned to parley on so delicate a subject,” replied the crafty lord Burleigh—“ Ere you give way to these violent transports, remember how fatal they may prove. Over the head of the queen of Scots the sword has long hung only by a single thread—it is now put into your hand—consider well, ere next I see you, *who and what you will be.*” With these tremendous words he rose and left me. Left me—ah! how?—convulsed, annihilated: a terror hitherto unknown seemed to fix every feature and freeze every sense. —“ Oh Thou, whose awful will alone could authorize this nameless infliction, give me strength to bear it!” sighed forth my shocked soul. “ Can I then deserve the title of daughter only by renouncing all claim to it? My mother, my gracious royal mother! who, even when overwhelmed with woes, didst take such tender care of the little unfortunates to whom thou gavest being—ah! were their lives preserved but to shorten thine?” Meditations

like these almost shook the seat of reason; and I resolved to conform to the most inhuman command of Elizabeth, rather than suffer the horrible scene this last implication presented, to pass another hour before my bewildered senses.

It was surely at this tremendous crisis in my life, that my fermented blood first adopted and cherished those exuberances of passion, which ever after warped the equality and merit of my character; that blood, now boiling in my veins, joined with a disordered imagination to call around me a thousand visionary inconsistent forms, to whose voices my burning heart responded—now slowly retreating to every vital source, the very powers of being seemed to congeal; and I remained for hours a breathing icicle. Whenever the first sensation actuated me, the strong desire of saving my mother still returned; and in these dire revolutions of constitution four and twenty dreadful hours elapsed.

Lord Burleigh, at the same time the next day, came once more to learn my final resolution. Scarce able to reply or raise my

heavy eyes from the ground, in which they sought and saw only a grave, my whole appearance strongly indicated how I had passed the interval. The desolate acquiescence my silence bespoke encouraged him to produce a paper. He began reading it; while rivetted with a new surprise, I listened to the incredible and disgraceful forgery, as if I had lost every other sense than that of hearing. It was called, as I think, "the voluntary confession of Ellinor, on behalf of herself and her sister Matilda;" and set forth, "that soon after Mary, queen of Scots, sought shelter in England, (under the protection of her sister Elizabeth), for divers politic and ambitious reasons, (as first, in case her only son should die and leave her without issue, on which to support her claim to Great Britain as well as to the kingdom she had lately abandoned; next to attach to her interest the disloyal persons into whose charge she was given), she resolved to pretend to have made a marriage with Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk; and by the aid and confederacy of his sister the lady Scroope, (whose lord

was her keeper), together with that of divers Scottish servants, as well as of one Gertrude Marlow, (the bastard sister of lord Scroope), the said queen of Scots did feign a pregnancy, and in process of time a delivery of two daughters, who were, with the assistance of the said confederates, brought up in secrecy by the said Gertrude Marlow, till such time as Mary should judge fit to produce them; and that sundry testimonials were invented, drawn, and witnessed by said parties, tending to legitimate said surreptitious offspring at the pleasure of the queen of Scots, by the names of Matilda and Ellinor. The said Ellinor, understanding in process of time the above plausible collusion, and sorely repenting the offence against Elizabeth, queen of England, her lawful lady and sovereign, doth, on behalf of herself and sister Matilda, freely acknowledge and solemnly affirm, that they do not believe themselves born of the said Mary, queen of Scots, but have reason to know their parents of a low degree, who, for the lucre of gain, resigned them for ever, to be done

with as the said queen of Scots and her confederates thought best. This declaration is made and signed on the spot where Ellinor owns herself and sister were thus secretly brought up, to wit, the Abbey of St. Vincent, the seat of the late lord Scroope, in the presence of," &c. Having concluded this notable memorial of villainy, he summoned several domestics, and put a pen into my hand. My unsubdued, indignant soul spurned at the idea of vilifying both myself and mother, even to save her life. I would have spoken, but ere grief and rage could be converted into language, he transfixed me with a look, and holding before my eyes an order for the execution of the queen of Scots, signed, dated, authentic, complete in every form, my shuddering nature could not endure the conflict. I rashly scrawled my name, and snatching that tremendous mandate he yet held before me, tore it into a thousand atoms, and sunk upon the ground in the most violent convulsions. They were so rapid and dreadful, that to have left me alone would have been little else than

murder. His domestics attended me with a humanity unknown to their lord ; and these fits at last gave place to a frenzy fever. Alas ! during its raging paroxysms I doubtless continually confuted the infamous tale I had witnessed, for every affecting remembrance pressed upon my confused and weakened mind. My mother, my sister, and my love, by turns bled before my eyes, and death presented himself in every form dear to me, while I vainly invoked him to take my own.

Exhausted nature seemed to rest on the very verge of the grave—ah, had I then sunk into it, how many pangs had I been spared ! The care of my attendants at length so far recovered me as to enable me to quit my bed, when pronouncing me well, they left me to my own meditations —a hideous train, my sister ! To add to their bitterness, fancy had now thrown a new colour on my fate. How if this infamous forgery had been extorted from me only to stigmatize my sister and myself ? —A still more aggravating idea sprung from that.—What should prevent Eliza-

beth from presenting to the eyes of the unfortunate queen of Scots a defamatory declaration, which must give her a stab no less mortal than the blow it saved her from, though perhaps more slow? how indeed, if so, could I hope she would ever forget or forgive an instance of depravity, apparently as unaccountable as it was shocking? finally, (oh, grief yet more pungent!) might not the queen take pleasure in wringing the haughty soul of Essex, by shewing him the unhappy object of his dearest affections for ever stigmatized by her own hand?—This painful assemblage of ideas and objects was too much for my hurt brain; I groaned, I shrieked, I relapsed, and very nearly obtained the relief I so much longed for.

Impelled thus by tyranny down the precipice of fate, my swift course seemed ready to bury me in the gulph it overhangs, when another projecting point interposed, and suddenly stopped me. I recollect that in thus resigning myself to the stroke, I rendered the last fatal blot my own.

hand had fixed on my character indelible; while, if I lived, I had yet a chance of justifying my intention, in an act which reflected alike on myself and all dear to me. By a weakness for which I cannot account, I suddenly became more willing to support all the evils of a life thus prolonged, than the idea of an unknown end, and an unhonoured grave.

My constitution, destined to struggle with still greater calamities, sunk not wholly under the impression of these; but the period of recovery was marked by a gloom and dejection I can never forget. Silence was now no less my habit than inclination, and I often fancied myself incapable of speaking. Lord Burleigh, by a second visit, called together every enfeebled power remaining. Regarding my altered countenance with an air of insidious pity, he lamented the painful duty imposed on him by the queen. Estranged from sympathy so long, that the least mark of it affected me, I sunk into languor and tears. — “Unhappy young creature,” resumed he, “destined every way to condemn yourself,

hear all. I am commissioned now to say, and finally decide your own fate. I need hardly inform you, that on whatever claims your connexion with the queen of Scots is founded, a due regard for herself, and the peace of the kingdom of England, will not allow my royal mistress to enlarge one whose high spirit and distinguished understanding must so greatly aid whatever cause she is a party in. But when the attachment between you and the earl of Essex is considered, (whose ambition and daring temper sufficiently alarm the prudent part of the queen's counsellors, unassisted as he yet is by any imaginary rights), it is obvious that one way alone can you hope for freedom." At the dear name of Essex, to which my ear had been so long estranged, every emotion that had gathered slowly into my heart, spread in wild perturbation through my frame. I faintly repeated it, but lord Burleigh motioned me to silence, and I confined to contemptuous glances my opinion of the remainder of his speech.—" I shall not conceal from you," continued he, " that Essex has had

influence enough over the queen to make her, for a while, suppress her sentiments on this error in his conduct. Perhaps she would have trusted to time for otherwise matching you, but that this hot-headed, rash young man"—I groaned in impatient silence—he cast on me an attentive eye, and pursued his subject—"After finding it in vain to hope he should discover your asylum, (for which I must tell you he spared neither threats, entreaties, money, or assiduity), he completely irritated Elizabeth by uniting himself in a plot to release the queen of Scots. Providentially for my royal mistress, it transpired in time, and the traitors are taken. The chief object of her indignation must of course be him she so greatly favoured. Convinced that you are the only cause of his rebellious practices, nothing but your making another choice can save him from expiating them on the block. A fond weakness renders Elizabeth still anxious to preserve him. For my own part, I confess, the safest remedy I shall always think the best."—"Ah, let him live," groaned I, adopting at

once the train of ideas the crafty Burleigh so artfully arranged, “ though not for me ! Even Elizabeth is merciful, and shall I then condemn him ? rob the world of an unequalled ornament, only because I am not permitted to possess it ? I will no more haunt her slumbers—I will no more gild his—of what consequence is the name I am called by during the few days I linger in this miserable world ? Inform me, my lord, but how can I save him ? ”—“ The same reasons that concur in obliging the queen to separate you and Essex,” said the insidious Burleigh, “ will equally prevent her from matching you with any man gifted with his aspiring qualities ; yet as it is not her wish wholly to debase you, lord Arlington was to me the messenger of her will ; ” (I shuddered at the fatal name) “ the bounded capacity he possesses is one motive for her choosing him, as it ensures her own safety ; and his titles and fortunes another, as those are distinctions she is not willing to deprive you of. You marry him, or he returns directly, and his return

is the signal for the execution of lord Essex."

Yet weak and unrecovered, my mind wanted firmness to enter into all the reasons which should regulate my conduct. Alas! I saw no more of my own fate than was inseparably interwoven with that of my lover. Urged by the generous excesses of which I knew his heart capable, he has for my sake then endangered his honour, liberty, and life. Perhaps that danger is exaggerated, hinted prudence—but oh, if not—if actuated by fear and rage, Elizabeth should condemn him to the block, as she already had my father, for no greater crime—my wounded soul shrunk from the bare idea—long faintings and delirium followed—fancy realized every image fraud had presented—I seemed to behold every moment the chosen of my heart tried, sentenced, executed—I drenched the maimed, yet beauteous form my soul for ever worshipped in my tears, and hardly could be persuaded, during my lucid intervals, that Essex yet lived, and

that his fate still depended on my determination.

Lord Burleigh, faithful to the ungenerous trust reposed in him, and weary of the task of confining me, took a willing advantage of the weakened state of my intellects, to wring from me a compliance with the wish of Elizabeth. I was now released from my prison, and the chaplain and family being assembled, lord Arlington was introduced, the contracts signed, and a tearful midnight marriage abruptly solemnized, during which my abstracted mind pursued a thousand distant ideas.

* * * * *

Wedded—lost—annihilated—the woe-
ful mistress of a magnificent solitude, where
my inward eyes traced for ever the revered
steps of those who were no longer to be
found on earth, one only consolation could
my exhausted heart supply. “I die, that
Essex may live—I sigh, that he may
breathe freely.” But, oh! what sighs were
mine! they seemed to tincture with black-
ness and melancholy the very air that re-
ceived them. Lord Arlington wanted

judgment alike to subdue the deep regrets of silent sufferance, or to yield to them. My mind could never hold any correspondence with his; and by this means alone was I ignorant, for a time, of a calamity, which, when known, totally overwhelmed me: alas, my sister! by a refinement in barbarity, our sainted mother was led to execution, almost at the very moment that I was defaming you and myself to save her. This climax of grief and misfortune was too mighty for my reason—I had passed from fear to fear, from sorrow to sorrow, in such rapid succession, that there were only intervals enough of time to render each more poignant. In one short month to behold myself deceived, defamed, and sacrificed! how could I avoid blending the bitter tears of self-love with those of filial duty and affection? The idea of Essex remained engrained on my heart, and doubled every agonizing sensation. Lord Arlington, however, returned to court, which gave me the little relief of solitude: Severed thus at once from every tie, both of nature and of choice, dead while

yet breathing, the deep melancholy which had seized upon my brain soon tinctured my whole mass of blood—my intellects, strangely blackened and confused, frequently realized scenes and objects that never existed, annihilating many which daily passed before my eyes. I sometimes observed the strong surprise of my attendants when I spoke of these visions, but much oftener I remained lethargic and insensible. There were moments when I started as from a deep sleep, (and oh! how deep a sleep is that of the soul!)—turned my dubious eyes around with vague remembrance—touched my hand, to be convinced that I yet existed—trembled at the sound of my own voice; or raising my uncertain eye toward the blue vault of heaven, found in the all-cheering sun a stranger. Alas, my sister! look no more in this sad recital for the equal-minded rational being you once saw me; sensations too acute for either endurance or expression, from this fatal period blotted every noble faculty, often substituting impulse for judgment. Always sensible of my

wandering the moment it was past, chance continually succeeded, and united every misery of madness and reason.

Spring, reviving all nature, extends its genial influence even to the withered heart. My intervals became more calm and frequent. I gathered strength to walk into the garden—there I slowly retraced to myself the fatal whole, and began to find, or fancy it more supportable. That I had been a dupe to Elizabeth and her minister, was too obvious; but I was willing to acquit the weak man, perhaps sufficiently punished in a wife like me, of having been a confederate in their plots. I had long been the object of his choice, and it is a common error among his sex to be careless of the means by which their views succeed, provided they attain them. But my feeble efforts towards recovery requiring every indulgence, I wrote to lord Arlington, assuring him, I would make the best use of my returning reason, in forming my heart to the future performance of those painful duties a combination of fatal circumstances had imposed on it; but that

the task was too difficult not to claim every allowance on his part; and concluded with hoping, solitude would enable me one day to meet him with feelings less embittered.

With my intellectual powers too returned my affections. The mystery of your fate, my sister, and that of lord Leicester, racked my weary imagination in vain. I enclosed in the letter to lord Arlington a billet to lady Pembroke. It contained only an inquiry for you.

When these letters were dispatched, I bent my every thought to fulfilling the promise made in the first. A thousand times, on my knees, I besought the Almighty to confirm those upright sentiments he alone could inspire; I strove to obliterate every remembrance of the human means by which his will was effected, and considering it only in the light of *his* will, tried meekly to submit to it. Alas! the answer of lady Pembroke shook every just determination—astonishment, terror, and affection, were obvious in every line of it—eagerly she solicited news of myself,

and the incomprehensible means which first restored me to St. Vincent's Abbey, as well as those which fixed me there by so extraordinary a marriage.

From her letter I at last understood a part of your motives for so suddenly absenting yourselves. I found too that you had happily arrived in France, by the accounts many had received from you; when all at once (she added) the correspondence broke off, and every effort at renewing it only increased the sadness and perplexity of your friends. That Le Val having obeyed the orders left by his lord in hastening to Kenilworth, came on from thence to the Recess, which he found thrown open, as well as that his lord had infallibly been there. Not able to gather any farther information, he hastened back to London, there to wait lord Leicester's directions; but none arriving, this extraordinary and alarming silence induced the faithful steward to return to his native country in search of his lord. Fear and grief having however seized upon his heart, a bad passage wrought both up to a crisis,

and he died immediately on his landing. That every other messenger and friend had been equally unsuccessful, though many had traced you as far as Rouen. Nor had the mystery of *your* fate ever yet been even guessed at, though lord Leicester was admitted to be dead by every body. It was given out that he expired in his way to Kenilworth Castle. Certainly he was there laid in state, and afterwards interred at Warwick; but notwithstanding this report was apparently believed, as having the weight of the queen's credence, the strongest doubts arose in the minds of his friends and relations, upon her seizing Kenilworth Castle, and various possessions of his, as a security for sums due to her—a conduct little agreeing with the indulgence she had for so many years shewn towards her favourite. In fine, having bribed the servants employed in blazoning this pompous fiction, the family were indubitably assured, that the body buried under the name of lord Leicester was one procured for the purpose.

Almost petrified by this mysterious and

affecting recital, I strove in vain to expound it: that lord Leicester was dead could hardly be doubted; but when, where, or how, imagination could not fathom. Yet the conduct of the queen proved her too well informed.—“ Ah, where then,” cried I, “ is now my Matilda? Where then that more unfortunate being than even myself? Convinced, by a comparison of circumstances, that your death would alike have been published, but that by some undiscoverable event you survived your lord, I was led to conclude some convent in France still supplied you a grave to groan in; yet even if so, why bury with you that information, for want of which so many affectionate hearts have been racked? Alas, my darling sister, year after year have I vainly repeated to myself this one affecting question! Emerge, I beseech you, if yet an inhabitant of this world, and satisfy a fearful heart which aches with fondness. Nay, if translated to a better, and yet sensible of aught sublunary, oh, deign to inform me! How often, in the depth of midnight, when the hap-

pier world are at rest, have I called upon thee, impelled by an affection incapable of fear—but all was awful silence—no voice replied to me—no form obtruded on the deep gloom where sight itself is lost—yet the days that elapse in incertitude pass not in vain; they insensibly urge forward one ordained to clear up every doubt."

* * * * *

I dreamt of Essex—Ah, what did I say? I dreamt of Essex?—Alas, I have dreamt of him my whole life long!—Something strangely intervenes between myself and my meaning.—No matter, I am too stupefied now to explain it.

* * * * *

Oh, these cruel wanderings!—but I dare not attempt to correct or avoid them, lest in the very effort reason evaporate, and one inconsiderate stroke should confuse my whole story.

* * * * *

Alas! lady Pembroke, how could you venture to tell me that lord Essex was married?—and to lady Sydney too?—Gracious Heaven! I made myself a wretch

then, only to crown her future days with unspeakable happiness!—At this idea overwhelming passion breaks the feeble boundaries of reason and religion, and sweeps away inferior sorrows—my mother—my sister—alas, those ties so dear, so revered, serve only to swell the flood that sinks them!

Hence, agonizing sensations! I have drawn them up, Matilda, in one weighty sigh. Ah, surely my heart escaped unawares at the same moment, it has left such a fearful void within.—Yes, my sister, Essex is indeed married; that *very* Essex for whom I more than died—and privately too—the sacred, tender union had every charm, but honour—for lady Sydney he incurred the anger of the vindictive queen. Gracious Heaven, I thank thee for that thought!—it was not for ~~me~~—No, I was dying, withering at the heart, far from the most false—ah, still the most beloved of his sex!—that little thought strangely consoles ~~me~~—rather indeed would I have died, than have been a spot upon that re-

diant sun my dim eyes no more must look up to.

* * * * *

I perceive I have, in the wild colourings of a disordered imagination, unfolded a truth my heart almost burst with: this thunder-stroke concluded lady Pembroke's second letter. How deep, how dreadful was its effect! tranquillity, health, reason, all fled before it: to the evils fate imposes, however grievous, our nature insensibly accommodates itself; but, oh, when the arrows of calamity are winged by love, and dipt in poison by friendship, the wounds they make always gangrene. The idea of deceit, ingratitude, and unkindness, irritated and preyed on me continually. It brought on another Greenland winter's night, which lasted many lingering months, and in recovering I seemed to acquire a new disposition. I had lost with my equanimity all sweetness of temper: revenge seemed the only principle which supported my being, and I nourished a project in secret long ere I could bring it forward.

Wonder not at this alteration, my sister : misfortune serves but to soften the soul ; injury alone can render it callous. Ah ! strange that we should at the very moment imbibe the vice by which we suffer !

Lord Arlington, early in the spring, revisited St. Vincent's Abbey. My resentments being levelled at a dear and distant object, I behaved towards him, when mistress of my intellects, with a melancholy graciousness, which made him fancy them restored, and proposed taking me with him to London, when necessity obliged him to return. I acquiesced with readiness, as this was the very point to which I wished to bring him, and my unexpected complaisance, flattering the egregious self-love that marked his character, he was charmed with the effect, without examining into the cause. He was easily persuaded that decorum would demand my being presented at court, and undertook to propose it to Elizabeth ; while lady Pembroke, amazed alike at all she heard and all she saw, steadily opposed a project fraught with so many painful uncertainties. But it was the

passion of lord Arlington to mortify Essex, and conceiving that in his power only by presenting to his rival's eyes the dear object fatal circumstances had robbed him of, and others yet more fatal had wedded to himself, he soon became as interested in my wish as if his own heart had dictated it. The queen heard it, as I foresaw, with surprise, and declined it with scorn; but she soon found that I had skill enough to manage even the fool she had selected for me, who persisted in quitting the court, if she denied him the compliment due to his birth. Elizabeth had now put her peace so far into his power, that she dared not entirely break with him; and fearful lest the black history hid in my heart should be published to the world, were she to urge her imprudent refusal, she at last reluctantly consented to receive me. I heard this with a bitterness of spirit I once thought myself incapable of, and brooded over the dreary triumph I had so long projected.

I deferred appearing at court from time to time, till certain lord Essex was return'd

ed from the camp. Alas ! the universal pleasure that return excited, aggravated my deep and increasing resentment. Distinguised now with the same partiality Elizabeth once shewed to your lord, loaded with honours in his own person, and the chief medium through which others obtained them, Essex conducted himself with such nobleness as endeared him even to those whom he failed to serve; while the happy few who won his confidence, looked up to him as to a being of a superior kind. I, I alone, dared silently to impeach his generosity, his honour, his integrity. Wearied with an everlasting discussion of his merits in all companies, and not daring to utter one syllable on the subject, lest groans should take place of language, I often testified an anger and impatience lord Arlington construed into an extinction of that fatal passion I once entertained for his rival, and a due regard for the rights which he had acquired over me. Charmed with this idea, he became lavish in the jewels and other customary ornaments; and the tranquillity with which I

prepared to appear, lulled every suspicion to sleep. Alas ! while they were adorning me with the costly habiliments selected for the occasion, I took a malicious pleasure in tracing the ravages grief had already made in my features, constitution, and figure ; the first shrunk, wan, and withered ; the latter emaciated beyond all concealment. I knew that, however those who saw me every day might deceive themselves, in presenting this shadow to his eyes, whose ardent heart once touched with colours yet more glowing, a form then rich with the gifts of nature, youth, and hope—oh, well I knew what volumes of reproaches were contained in a single look !

I entered the presence-chamber with an air of determination, grandeur, and composure, astonishing even to myself. My soul found him she alone sought in a moment. Essex was resting one arm on the back of the queen's chair, in the same familiar, gay, and graceful attitude I had so often seen lord Leicester assume—his dress, bold, magnificent, and martial—his features (oh, those fatal features ! destined

to subdue alike my wise and erroneous resolutions) lighted up by every emotion—youth, softness, pride, and pleasure, ever blended. His fine eyes, lightly glancing over each surrounding object, fixed at last on me—fixed, I may well say: how deep, how deadly, was the effect of that single look! his unfinished speech to the queen became annihilated, while his quivering lips, in broken sounds, breathed forth unutterable anguish. Surprise, tenderness, grief—ah, more than grief!—agony—chased away the bright expression of happiness from every perfect feature, and flooded his eyes in a moment. No longer remembering the place, the queen, the circle, he started forward, and almost in the act of kneeling, felt the absurdity, and vanished; with him too vanished every trace of that misapplied reason which had so strongly impelled me to this strange revenge. They told me, I suffered myself to be led to the chair of the queen, who no sooner, in the common form, presented me her hand, than I haughtily repelled it, and fixing my eyes on her with a dreadful mean-

ing, gave a deep groan, and sunk senseless at her feet. Elisabeth started up in high indignation, and reproaching lord Arlington as not less mad than myself, in thus obstructing me upon her, retired precipitately to her closet. Not much more sensible than his wife, through astonishment at a conduct so unexpected on my part, he soon so far recovered his faculties, as to take the advice of his friends, in trying to appease the queen, committing me to the care of those around me. By this means alone he escaped witnessing a scene which touched the sensibility of every spectator. My friends bore me through the great gallery, as the way most convenient: in the antichamber leading to it, the unhappy lover I had taken a barbarous satisfaction in wounding, had thrown himself on a couch to recover at leisure. A presentiment of the fact, as the crowd approached, made him eagerly start up, and resigning himself to the impression of the moment, he rushed through them all; and snatching me with impetuosity from those who held me, placed me on the couch, and kneeling

beside it, sought to reanimate my chilled senses with burning tears and agonized embraces. A thousand times he called me his dear betrothed love! his murdered, precious Ellinor!—"Here is some black artifice, some diabolical villany, in this business!" would he cry, starting up haughtily, and throwing his inflamed eyes around, in dreadful search of him who happily was absent. "Oh, if I find it so," added he, "they shall not escape who severed us!" By vague and rash exclamations he thus published the chief incident of our unhappy story; while I alone, still insensible, heard not the well-known voice I once fancied the grave only could close my ear to.

This scene, which every following moment threatened to make fatal, was at last interrupted by the appearance of lady Pembroke. The excellent understanding of that amiable woman had made her from the first consider my desire of appearing at court (even while unapprised of its motives) as the wild start of an unsettled mind: she had employed entreaty and argument in vain to make me give it up;

finding the project alike agreeable to lord Arlington and myself; she became silent on the subject, but declined accompanying me, and dreading some strange event, retired to her own apartments in the palace, to tremble for it in secret. The news of my having frightened the queen, and broken up the court, immediately reached her there. However offended at my obstinacy, she was shocked at its effects, and readily emerged to serve and save me, if possible. Pressing through the astonished crowd, the fond extravagance of lord Essex continually increased; she beheld me in his arms, and heard his lamentation. Amazement in her collected mind is but a momentary emotion.—“ What are you doing, my lord ? ” said she, with an air which recalled even him; “ is this the way to recover the senses or reason of this dear unfortunate ? Remember the respect due both to her and yourself, and leave her entirely to my care.” Neither prayers nor anger warped her from rectitude: she commanded her servants to bear me to her

barge, and followed me herself. The distracted Essex held her by force, and vainly solicited leave to attend me. With a dignity which eminently distinguishes that charming woman, she chid him for a madness not less extravagant than my own, though far more censurable, and requested her lord to pay him an equal attention.

The women who followed me into the barge sprinkled me with water; that and the open air gradually revived those faculties so long dormant that they seemed gone for ever. I feebly lifted my head from the bosom of lady Pembroke, and wondered awhile how I came there. A thousand gloomy uncertainties occurred to my mind, and a flood of tears at last so far relieved me, as to suffer it to fix on the fact. Lady Pembroke, perceiving I was capable of attending to her, spared me the trouble of inquiring into the past scene by relating it, with such comments as an enlarged and tender heart would naturally dictate. My pulses were yet low, and her gentle admonitions made a due impression.

—“Review the whole of this wild scheme,

my dear Ellinor," said she, " and I think you will unite with me in calling it so. The queen (beyond your revenge in this world) can amply retaliate on every one dear to you, for the temporary alarms and vexations you cause her. From the eyes of the noble Essex you have snatched away a bandage which saved both him and yourself from danger. I have hitherto suffered you to imagine him unfaithful and guilty, because anger in your situation must be a much less dangerous emotion than love: His whole soul is once more awakened, and I would in vain now affect to deceive either him or you; he will be heard; he will even be seen, if to the rash ardour of his temper you do not oppose the most inflexible prudence. Alas, my sweet friend, what direful conflicts do I see before you—conflicts that the strong and untried soul would wish to shrink from! how then shall your wounded spirit——" — "Fear not," answered I, nerved by the occasion, " my dear, my watchful monitress. Born for conflict, I seem only to exist by that mental action; and though I lament with you the

invincible obstinacy which has once more thus involved me, yet believe me, I seem better able to bear every evil which may result from the vindication of Essex, than the dreadful weight of his supposed ingratitude. For every other calamity I had been accustomed to prepare my heart. That heart, cherished by tears and softness, started not into excess till those sources were dried up. Ah, open again every sluice of pleasure! Tell me that Essex is indeed innocent, unaltered! tell me that he is still the incomparable being my youthful fancy first worshipped! tell me, in short, the whole truth, and see if my soothed senses are not equal to the confidence."—"How little reason do these eager exclamations, these impassioned tears and glowing cheeks, give me to think so?" wistfully replied the sweet lady Pembroke; "perhaps, were it yet in my choice, I should still resolve to deceive you; but in now revealing all, I am only beforehand with him, who, in tenderly urging a just vindication of his conduct, would effectually re-establish himself in your affections, to

the utter ruin of the little peace Heaven has allowed you.

“ The desperate state of my health at the time when yourself and sister so unaccountably vanished, made my lord guard against my obtaining that information with the utmost caution, and the first alarm I received was from the sudden return and perpetual visits of the earl of Essex. These were often at odd and improper hours, and generally began or ended with a private conference. A continuance of this conduct, even after I was able to quit my apartment, gave me a disgust to your lover I did not conceal from my lord. He pleaded the affliction of Essex as his only and indeed sufficient excuse, and thus laid himself open to my inquiries, which soon obliged him to own the whole truth. Its deep effect on me made lord Pembroke congratulate himself on having thus long concealed it. My agitation and affection soon reconciled me to Essex, and united me in his views. Wholly engrossed by the hope of finding you, every day gave birth to a new project in one or the other. How

many disappointments did we experience! Yet the fertility of his imagination being only equalled by the warmth of his heart, no toil discouraged him; and adopting all his aerial plans, I urged him to perseverance, taking pleasure in heaping fuel on a flame prudence should rather have stifled. News happily arrived of lord Leicester and Matilda, which renovating every hope in both him and me, I joined the deluder self in assuring him that he was destined to restore you to the noble exiles, and in receiving your hand, to unite himself at once in their happiness and fate.

“ The romantic heroism interwoven in his character, made him readily listen to these pleasing delusions; till a strange rumour reached us one day, that you had been married to lord Arlington, in the presence of lord Burleigh, and left by him at St. Vincent’s Abbey. Impressed with the strongest reliance on your faith, Essex asserted it in the warmest terms, and seemed ready to fly to the spot where it was reported you yet existed. The paleness of my complexion reproved his implicit confidence.

The name of Burleigh—the remembrance that Arlington had lately quitted the court—that intuitive sense which arranges and combines a thousand important nothings, tending to stamp a sad conviction more instantaneously than one can pronounce a sentence—now proved to me the truth of this. Lord Pembroke proposed going to the minister, and thus deciding the point. We gladly consented; and Essex traversing the room in great agitation during the interval, found a thousand reasons to justify his opinion, so cautiously collected as shewed he was not without a secret fear. Lord Pembroke at length returned, and confirming the fatal news, added that lord Burleigh had shewn him the contract signed by both. But what was the pallor impressed on my countenance, to that which spread over the florid complexion of your lover at this fatal confirmation! The silent struggle in his soul surely combined every pang of death, without affording its relief. Speech and colour at last returned; his cheeks now glowed with indignation, while his lips trembled with transports of

bitterness and grief. He quitted us precipitately, and my lord devoting himself to assuage my sorrow, was not immediately sensible of the departure of our friend. Alas ! could either of us possibly have suspected the fate—the, untoward fate that awaited him !

“ The moment lord Essex thus abruptly quitted our house, he hastened to that of sir Francis Walsingham, where he found only lady Sydney, who secretly as sensible of his merit as she had before been of my brother’s, received him with equal surprise and pleasure. Without entering into the motives which influenced his conduct, he eagerly tendered himself to her acceptance. Her objections were, those of one who wished to be persuaded, and he would neither hear of demur or delay ; his own chaplain was quickly summoned, and the marriage solemnized in a manner almost as sudden and solitary as your own. Ah, fatal marriages both, beginning and ending in tears ! This news broke upon us with the morning. Lord Pembroke was astounded I recommended to him to

hasten to the wretched bridegroom, and reconcile his mind to the unlucky choice he had thus precipitately made, ere rash expressions of grief or disappointment should rouse that turbulent spirit, which had made my amiable brother's philosophy so soon give way to disgust. Well we knew the fiery soul of Essex would spurn at such a bondage, however voluntary.

“ The contempt and coldness both lord Pembroke and myself had always shewn to this imperious woman, who first introduced discord into a family before distinguished by unanimity, rendered this a great effort of friendship. The time lost in reconciling our feelings to this concension made it wholly useless. My lord found sir Francis almost annihilated with surprise, and understood at once that his daughter was in fits, and lord Essex gone. Unable wholly to conceal the anguish that preyed on his spirits, and flattering himself that a generous confidence in his bride might in time cement their union by the charm of esteem at least, Essex had laid open his whole heart to her. The mortal

hated she ever entertained both for yourself and sister, she wanted judgment at this period to stifle. The melancholy Essex, who sought for pity, not passion, now inadvertently defended her he had unwarily arraigned. The vindictive temper of his bride blazed forth in all its littleness, and the quarrel rose so high, that early the next morning he ordered his horses; and calling her at once 'his error and his punishment,' he took his leave with the bitter remark, 'that he followed in all things the fate of sir Philip Sydney.' A reproach like this might well shock the most callous heart—it threw lady Essex into fits. Regardless of this, her lord mounted, and departing with the utmost swiftness, was soon out of the reach both of friends and enemies.

"The queen, who became every day more partial to Essex than she had been the former one, insensibly had suffered him to take, both in her heart and court, the place of lord Leicester. It was the opinion of many that she intended to marry him; and the rage this step of his excited in

her, lent force to the extravagant conjecture. Deeply resenting alike his hasty marriage and abrupt departure, she banished his lady the court; nor did sir Francis escape a reprimand, however undeserving it.

" Essex soon fitted out some ships, with which he joined Drake and Norris; and his fame daily endearing him more to the queen, she could hardly support that appearance of resentment she thought due to his somerility, and incessantly languished for his return.

" We soon had letters from the earl, acknowledging the rash step he had taken in marrying; and that to avoid blushing for it in our presence, he had thus exiled himself. Though pride made him still speak of you with acrimony, it was obvious, from the tenor of the whole letter, that he had quitted England no less to avoid seeing you, than living with the woman he had invested with a legal right to make him unhappy. The generous anxiety he shewed for your sister, in sending, even at this juncture, sir Walter Curtis once

more to Rouen, with directions to spare neither trouble or money to discover Matilda, was another new instance of that nobility of mind which always graces even his faults. Consecrating his cares to a more noble pursuit than love, he thus sought to fill up the void—the aching void, that blighted passion had left in his heart.

“He was not born for inaction, and soon his daring spirit employed the thoughts of the whole nation; when Elizabeth, who knew too well that its present exertions were but the wild efforts of disappointment and despair, relaxed at once from all her apparent rigour, and recalled him. Disgust had sunk so deep that he still hesitated, and nothing but her peremptory command could induce him to return. While in daily expectation of him, I received your first letter. It contained not a word that could inform me of your real situation, or the motives of an action so eccentric as your acceptance of lord Arlington. Your long silence, your obscure and laconic epistle, the strong desire I had

to see tranquillity restored to yourself and your lover, though happiness had escaped both, made me resolve to shew him the letter, in which he was not even named, if once the subject arose; from this I guessed that he would most probably conclude your marriage with your own free-will, as well as the retired style of your present life. An opportunity soon offered—nor was I mistaken in my judgment. Lord Essex perused your epistle in silent astonishment, and the conviction it conveyed produced a surprising alteration in his mind and manners. No symptom of either pride, passion, or disappointment, from that moment, has been visible in his conduct. Conforming at once to his fate, he profited by the indulgence of the queen, and resolved to live decently with his wife, if not happily. Never since have I heard your name from his lips—I knew not that it lived even in his heart; and finding this artifice so successful with one, I resolved to try it with the other. When you related to me the cruel fiction by which lord Burleigh wrought upon your

feelings, what purpose would it have answered to inform you, that Essex was never concerned in any plot—never imprisoned, much less condemned. The high sense you entertained of a sacrifice, apparently unvalued by him, made it improbable that any explanation, or even conversation, should take place between minds thus deeply and justly offended with each other. How then was I chagrined to see you, on your arrival in London, fondly nourish some unfathomable project, which threatened wholly to defeat mine! Finding all advice ineffectual, I thought it most judicious to leave your mind to its own workings, hoping the gentleness of your nature would counteract the irritation of your passions. Alas, my dear, this fatal day shews me my error, and its extent! In how many ways will you now wound the noble heart of Essex? Tortured at once with the anguish of disappointed, injured love, the narrow doubts of his untractable wife, and the arrogant vigilance of the queen, his life will, from this mo-

ment, be as devoid of comfort, as it has long been of hope."

The tender motives which dictated this late confession, as well as the past concealment—the melancholy inference with which lady Pembroke concluded, all made a deep impression on me, and opened every sluice of tenderness, to the great relief of my oppressed and burning heart.—“No, my generous, amiable friend,” returned I, in a more equal tone than lady Pembroke expected, “I cannot misconstrue conduct which has ever had the most upright intention; and in doing justice to that of the afflicted Essex, you supply me motives for an exertion I should otherwise sink under. The necessity for preventing a part of the evils my imprudence may occasion, will recall me to reason, honour, and myself.—Oh, thou!” cried I, melting into tears, “too deeply beloved, too deeply lamented, pardon me if I pass a dark and dewy cloud over the bright star of thy distinguished fortune; soon will that emerge with undiminished splendour, while I alone shall drop in tears, enriching the earth that hides

me—and you too, most favoured among women, in being born to share his fate, endeavour but to make it happy, and she who has no use for life, but to weep your lot, will join to crown it with every earthly felicity. I find my fluctuating mind unequal to entering farther on the interesting subject," concluded I, "on arriving at home. Adieu, my dear lady Pembroke! Be this embrace the pledge of mutual pardon; and if you have not blushed for the last, as well as first time, for your poor friend, her better self must again desert her." She strained me to the purest bosom that ever beat, and left me once more alone with that unstable counsellor, my own erring heart.

The return of lord Arlington, exasperated by the rage of the queen, and the surmises of the court, tried my firmest resolutions; perhaps even those would have been unequal to the conflict, but that I remembered my promise to lady Pembroke, and was determined to supply a bright example to that noble lover, I now considered as equally unfortunate with my-

self. I remained from this period wholly at home, yet not without expecting some intelligence from lord Essex, though I knew not how he could possibly convey it. It reached me at last in the most extraordinary manner. Lady Pembroke seized the first interval of loneliness to address me.—“ Perplexed circumstances make strange emissaries,” said she, sighing; “ who would have imagined that I should request to convey the letter of lord Essex to you, Elfinor? but finding him determined on thus addressing you, I voluntarily undertook the trust, as well to judge of all that passed, as to prevent his humiliating himself and you to whatever servant he could bribe, and perhaps, if he erred in his choice of a messenger, it would be to the ruin of your peace and reputation.”

Hardly hearing this generous preamble, my eager eyes were fixed on the letter, and I gave the fair hand that held it the spontaneous kiss I was at first tempted to bestow on the precious paper. Ah, how affecting were the emotions produced by

the sight of that well-known hand! His language was impassioned and incoherent—he accused himself, me, the friends of both, and the overruling fate which actuated all. He seemed assured that fraud, mystery, and a thousand yet unknown execrable arts, had been combined to separate us. He conjured me to discover both the persons and the means. He spoke of lord Arlington rather as a weak tool in the hands of his more crafty enemies, than the object of that deep and eternal resentment, which only slept till I supplied it one.—“Scorn,” continued he, “the narrow prejudices of custom, and your sex, nor be wholly the sacrifice of situation. Dare to be sincere, and think an adherence to your first sacred vows (vows dear as inviolable) the true point of honour, of religion, and morality. Oh, call to mind the fatal moment when you tore yourself, inexorably, from arms that beauteous form no more perhaps shall fill! A little confidence, a little faith, had then made both happy; now, alas! they can only make us less miserable. Yet speak, my betrothed love,”

concluded he, " tell me all—once more I conjure you, by those rights your falsehood or death alone can annul—tell me all ; and in your care of the life which throbs within this agitated bosom, give me a motive for wishing it to linger there."

As I perused this touching transcript of his soul, mine melted within me. Nevertheless I resolved to act up to the idea I had formed, and snatching a pen, I thus replied to him :—

" In giving you my heart, my lord, I own I gave you a right in every action of my life, which, though events may suspend, they cannot annihilate. Alas ! the only right I reserved to myself, was that of concealing aught which might render you unhappy. Suffer me then to bury in this bosom the combination of fatal events which tore us from each other. Need I tell you that they have wrung it even to phrenzy ; for nothing less could have justified the premeditated shock I cruelly gave you. The deep effect of my presence, perhaps. (for why should I conceal it?)

that of your own, join with a severe duty in telling me, that while thus circumstanced, we must meet no more. The world, a busy, partial judge, delights in beholding the execution of those painful sentences it imposes. Ah, chosen of my soul! remember its afflictions can only be completed, by your failing in the arduous task I am otherwise resolved to sustain. Rob me not of the melancholy pleasure fortune still allows me, in whatever solitude I am henceforth buried, of thinking him I selected from all mankind was every thing but an angel.

"Above the slavery of opinion, I know no guide but rectitude; that tells me: Heaven itself will approve the efforts I yet make to charm you to life, to greatness, to glory.—Oh, awful Father of universal being! whose will alone could snatch from each the only object in creation, sanctify to the noblest purpose these dictates of my reason, and form both for the separate lots appointed us. Elevate the passions of my Essex above the little motives of revenge or malice, sublime his love into

philanthropy, his rage into heroism ; and, oh, on the frail heart which now bleeds before thee, bestow patience and resignation, so to pass each long day as if the next were to unite me to him. I solicit not strength to expel him from that heart—no, rather may he ever continue its sole object : but be his conduct so ennobled, that when both are called with the whole world before thy dread tribunal, I may look down on the misjudging part of it, and truly say—“Father, it is not Essex I have loved, but virtue in his person.”

This passionate apostrophe, however highly wrought, was entirely calculated for the romantic spirit to whom it was addressed. I earnestly besought the amiable Essex to suffer this to end the correspondence, which admitted not an indulgence beyond those conveyed in the letter ; and gave it into the hands of my friend, with that sweet sense of self-applause, which ever attends the consciousness of having gone beyond a painful duty.

Yes, still this dear sensation remains to me, it irradiates at intervals the deep

gloom which steeps my soul, and annihilates my senses.—I fear I begin again to wander, for my handwriting appears to my own eyes that of Essex.—Oh, how tight my head, my heart seems bound!—will no one loosen the shrunk fibres?—Hark! Is not that the queen?—No, it was but the deep voice of the winter's wind.

* * * * *

Poor Essex!—and did my letter thus deeply affect him?—did he so fondly press it to his lips?—did he blister it with his tears? Those I have shed for thee, my love, would have drowned thee had they been treasured.—“Unequalled Ellinor—Oh, most adored!—Yes, I will pursue the bright wanderings of the pure mind I have assisted to unsettle, and be all she wishes me from this moment.”—Who told him I wandered then, I wonder?—I am sure I always strove against it before him—Ah, dear and precious sentiments, how my soul imbibes the charm!—Have you not a penknife, lady Pembroke, to write these words in my heart—on my very heart? Oh, I

would have them sink deep—deep—would feel as well as see them. And thou too, Memory, treacherous Memory, for once do thou retain the pleasant tone of the voice that repeated them—not even lady Pembroke's own is so harmonious.

* * * * *

Married to lord Arlington did you say?—Oh, such a marriage! What did he gain by villainy and fraud?—the insupportable society of a wild wretch, whose weary spirit threatened every moment to escape, and leave in his arms the vile dross he thus purchased. And yet they tell me it is so—he drags me about with him, and calls me his—his, oh Heavens!—But I am nobody's else, mark that—mark that, or we shall perhaps have murder, and I not there to step between the fatal swords, and see which will befriend me.

Matilda, I have not told you about that, I think; but I am not very able just now, such a heavy sleepiness seals up every faculty; and yet if I don't now, I never may wake more, you know—but I have waked over and over again, now I recollect,

till I am quite tired ; and so for once I will sink quietly into a slumber, and dream of you.

Let me snatch a moment of reason and recollection to forward my story. In pursuance of the good resolutions I had formed, I requested leave of lord Arlington to reside for the future wholly at St. Vincent's Abbey, to which he readily consented. If my offered retirement did not wholly obviate his suspicions, it left him at least no pretence for tormenting me with them. His character I ever found of a common stamp, credulous and mutable, yet self-willed and passionate: vain of the rights of his rank, without merit to distinguish them, he always conceived himself injured when another was preferred ; and the partiality of Elizabeth towards his rival, offended him almost as much as that I had so obviously expressed.

The generous Essex respected my peace and virtue so far, that after another fruitless effort to persuade me to see him, he consented to pursue the path I had traced

out, and satisfied of my fidelity, swore sacredly to cherish the sentiments I had permitted him to retain. It was needless to ask partial intelligence of a man who employed the voice of the kingdom. I had fortunately distinguished one, fame had adopted. I therefore took a tender leave of lady Pembroke, and mingling my parting tears with a thousand unspoken blessings, by an effort of virtue I admired in myself, I boldly encountered my fate, determined to use effort to render it as supportable as might be.

St. Vincent's Abbey again received me. This mansion lord Arlington had purchased at the time of his marriage, less for any charms he perceived in it, than the advantages of the country round, which supplied him with every variety of rural diversion. Here I at last began to breathe, and forming my mind to that melancholy repose, a decided destiny, however deplorable, allows, I called to my aid the sustaining principles of religion and morality. I turned my feeble feet towards every dwell-

ing misfortune had passed over, and raising both with gifts, and soothing the sad wretches she had depressed, reflected back into my own bosom the comforts I had bestowed. I gathered into the Abbey such of their children as were weakly and deformed, and while those blessed with florid health pursued the track of labour, the others were instructed in tapestry, point, reading, writing, and music, according to their sex and age. Surrounded by these affecting objects, who thus found in the liberality of art a counterbalance for the unkindness of nature, I sometimes touched my lute with sensations so sublime, that fancy dispersed every bodily imperfection in my little auditory, and lighting up their cheeks with the softest tinge of the morning, I seemed to see the human robes of wretchedness drop off, and the light pinions of immortality wave towards heaven. Striving by such, and indeed every means in my power, to shut out the fruitless wishes for lost happiness, which still beats fervently at my heart, I filled up with unceasing employments the long—long year.

Often did my feet wander towards the cell and the Recess. Often, in the well-known windings of that wood, where once we carolled together notes as careless and pleasant as those of the birds around us, have I paused, my sister, and watered with embittered tears the precious memorial of days that never could return.

Conscious that I could ill brook the least doubt or inquiry into my conduct, I made it an invariable rule never to pass the gate unaccompanied; yet lord Arlington conceived an antipathy to this solitary asylum every day increased. I did not compliment him with a total forbearance of the few amusements innocence and retirement allowed. Alas! I soon learnt from his conduct, that jealousy, the most restless and insatiate of all our passions, mingles in the habit, even when driven out of the heart. Had his love known the refinements common to that passion in a generous nature, he would have felt that an unhappy attachment is nourished by solitude and home; and that the person who once resolves to venture abroad, shews a noble

resolution to contend with it. A thousand times he haunted my footsteps, he broke in upon my loneliness. You would have thought he had taken pleasure in beholding the tears and regret he first occasioned.

The dotage of the queen became every day more manifest; and even the blow she in one of her wild transports gave Essex, more disgraced herself than him. His intrepid resentment, his uncourtly, sincerity, his haughty retirement, every action of his life, confirmed that admiration. I still thought myself entitled to cherish. The unbounded power he afterwards possessed, when reconciled, shewed the extravagance of her attachment; and Elizabeth, cruel, inexorable to me in every other instance, crowned to her own disgrace in this, the only wish she had permitted me to retain.

After several ineffectual efforts to gain distinction at court, lord Arlington conceived himself injured, and by retiring wholly into the country, persecuted me the year round with his company. But not having a taste for the sciences, nor any of those resources a strong understanding in

voluntarily supplies even to the unfortunate, he existed only while employed. Hawking, hunting, and fishing, span out the tedious years, and a rustic company often closed the evening with intoxication. That apathy my exhausted passions had now sunk into, appeared to his undiscerning mind content; and as his own love abated, he fancied mine increased, till he made a discovery that his most needy parasite never responded—namely, that we were at length entirely happy.

To confirm this surprising happiness, (which existed only in his own fancy, and perhaps owed its origin to continual inebriation), he resolved to exterminate those ruins where I had owned, I passed my childhood, and which, he thought, still kept alive embittered remembrance, time would otherwise extinguish. His steward suggested that the materials were wanted to erect a manufacture in the neighbourhood, and that the cutting down the surrounding woods, now grown to valuable timber, would more than answer to the expences incurred; while new plantations

would at once open the prospect on that side the Abbey, and deprive me of an inanimate object of affection, of which lord Arlington still entertained a jealousy as excessive as preposterous.

This proposal met with the strongest opposition from me on every account; it was dreadful to think of annihilating every trace of my youth—every object which could remind me that I had ever been beloved or connected; to disturb the sacred ashes of my early protectors, and leave them exposed to the winds of heaven and the hands of the labourer: but it was yet more dreadful to me to risk the little peace I had been able to collect from the wreck of all my hopes—to wake wishes, which perhaps were torpid, only because vain—to tempt lord Essex to break the promise I had wrung from him—in short, to take the most remote chance of again beholding the chosen of my heart; for to prevent the daily regret I might experience at being a spectator of this disagreeable metamorphosis in my favourite spot, lord Arlington was determined to take me

for that time to London. In vain I remonstrated: the stronger my disgust appeared, the less he imagined he had to dread; nor among his whole round of suppositions, once thought it possible that I could fear myself. Painful experience now reminded me that the least hint on this subject would be ruin, and every other reason rather strengthening his design, I was compelled to yield to it. How readily, with every passing mile, recurred the dear habitual impressions! My quickened pulses were again animated by my heart; and I beheld even the palace without disgust, because Essex reigned there. Lady Pembroke met me with an embrace neither time nor absence had chilled. She surveyed my amended looks with infinite satisfaction, and flattered herself, because I was no longer a spectre, I was happy. Ah, much-erring friend! the embers of that fatal fire tears had almost quenched, again were gradually re-lighting! I felt almost disappointed at hearing Essex was still on the seas—that, crowned with victory at Cadiz, his valour

had only been suspended by his conduct. The separation, this news excited, rendered me sensible of the precipice on which I stood, and thanking Heaven most devoutly for his absence, I acknowledged in it my safety.

The few friends fortune had left me welcomed my return with ardour; and in their society my subdued spirits might have found some relief, had I been permitted an unlimited share of it; but lord Arlington saw the world in a different point of view when mingling with it and at a distance. The habit of being informed of every employment, of mine he did not witness, had now grown upon him so strongly, that he laid an embargo on my time, and suffered none of it to be passed out of his own house without he was of the party. Indignation was by nature the marking feature of my soul. Alas, what sufferings had it already entailed upon me! This glaring insult at once shocked my feelings, and struck at my principles. Those traits of bitterness and wildness I had strove to obliterate in solitude and silence,

again, appeared in my character. I became sullen and impenetrable; for my own sake I forbore violence and error, but I no longer cared whether I was supposed to do so. Perhaps lord Arlington was not so culpable as he at first appeared, for the hatred of the countess of Essex inexorably pursued me. From the fatal moment when I fainted at court, she believed herself licensed in her injurious surmises. They had long known no bounds, and expecting her lord home daily, she, by remote and artful insinuations, poisoned the mind of mine, to secure her from any danger should Essex arrive.

Weak and misjudging woman! had she generously sympathized in the cruel events which robbed me of happiness to cast it away on her, my melting heart would have spent its last breath in wishing that happiness perpetuated. The purest mind alone attracts the venom of the world, as the ether the vapours of the earth; but like that, unless agitated to a storm, it soon recovers its clearness, and insensibly returns in blessings the grossness it exhaled.

Far from meditating any injury to the countess of Essex, I respected too much the peace of her husband's mind voluntarily to recall to his remembrance a wretch born but to destroy it.

Nevertheless I did not think virtue herself would refuse me one little satisfaction I could not but desire: a picture of the storming of Cadiz had been drawn by a Spanish painter taken there, and sent by Essex to lord Pembroke. Among the many portraits it preserved, his own was the most conspicuous, and every one pronounced it the finest ever drawn. It attracted the curiosity of all ranks of people, and the gallery it was placed in was scarcely ever empty. It was so much the topic of discourse, that fashion must have excited a desire in me to see it, had my heart been uninterested. Yet the unreasonable jealousy of lord Arlington condemned me to silence; nor dared I propose visiting lady Pembroke at this crisis, lest the desire should be construed into a proof of mental guilt. My nature spurned at the constraint to which I found myself

subjected; and my amiable friend (fearful that I should suffer in my intellects more severely for the self-denial than I possibly could for the indulgence) planned a method by which she thought the ill-effects of either guarded against.

The queen gave an entertainment at Greenwich on the marriage of one of her favourites; to which she invited the whole court; and a variety of masques and other entertainments were projected. Lady Pembroke could not dispense with appearing th^ere, nor could lord Arlington. Convinced that he must for once be safely absent, she proposed calling in her barge ere she went to Greenwich, and conveying me to her house, where she could leave me in the gallery, with orders to her servants to attend me home whenever I pleased.

In this project there was nothing dis-honourable or unsafe, and I embraced it readily. Lord Arlington, I knew, was to be at Greenwich in the morning, as the bridegroom was his relation, and I waited for the appointed moment with an im-
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tience those only who live like me whole years upon a look can judge of.

Lady Pembroke executed this design with as much facility as she had formed it, and passing on to Greenwich, committed me to the care of her family, who were told that it was my intention to copy a beautiful drawing of their lady fixed up in the gallery. How disdainful of mystery is a truly-noble soul! I stopt short on the threshold, and could I, without singularity, have ventured immediately to return, I had not entered the house. It was silent and solitary, all but the inferior domestics having followed either their lord or lady. The servants who conducted me locked the door by which I entered to guard me from intruders, to whom this picture had accustomed them. Ah, how lively was my emotion to behold the features indelibly impressed on my heart, perpetuated with almost the same strength and truth! In the act of wresting a sword (the inflamed eye of him who held it shewed had a moment before been pointed at the English general's bosom), Essex proudly looked

down on the surrounding Spaniards, whose impassioned gestures supplicated for the life of him who had thus immediately attacked the conqueror:—"Ah, Heaven," cried I, fearfully, bursting into tears, "havest I thus long dreamt of glory, honour, immortality, nor considered the dangers by which thou must acquire them?"—"Waste not those precious gems on senseless canvas!" said a voice to which my heart was born to vibrate: "behold thy Essex himself—thy faithful Essex, as truly thine as when this soft hand first returned his ardent pressure!"—Alas, my sister, what a vicissitude of powerful emotions took possession of my soul, and set every feature at an event so unexpected! Fear and horror were however prevalent, and seemed to check the sweetness of again beholding him; for though my eyes surveyed his form, my heart for the first time seemed to shut him out, and fold itself up in utter darkness.—"You speak not, my beloved," added he; "oh, satisfy my agonised heart, and let me think you know me!"—"Know you! Ah, Essex," faltered

I, redoubling my tears, "can naught but the grave obliterate those features from my memory? Perhaps even that wants the power—but a thousand nameless miseries make me shrink from the moment—make my terrified soul shrink even from you."—"Collect yourself, my worshipped Ellinor," resumed he, "believe me, I come not an artful, black seducer—chance, and chance only, has crowned wishes so long submitted to your will. It would not suffer those sacred sighs to become common air, those lovely tears to fall upon the earth—it sent me here to profit by indulgences you were willing to bestow on my shadow."—"If I withhold them from yourself," returned I, endeavouring to collect my fluttered thoughts, "impute it not to my will, but to the overruling fate which has torn us from each other. Oh, Essex, let us not venture once to look behind, but consider only the present. The time, the place, the person, would stamp me with ignominy if discovered, and destroy the only pride, the only consolation, fortune has left me. I have long ceased to live to

the world and to myself, but to my God and you I yet owe an exertion of the principles he gave, and you called into action."—I rose deeply disordered, and attempted to draw away my hand; but his firmer nerves obstinately retained the trembling prisoner, and my heart being unable to resist his piercing solicitations for a few minutes, I sat down once more with him by my side. Good Heavens, while I relate this, it appears a mere vision!—Did I really see Essex?—were my senses really revived by that voice so long forgotten, except when fancy recalled it?—ah! I have had but too sad a conviction that this *has* been, however strange and impossible it appears!—“Wrong me not with supposing I would entrap you, my sweet love,” said he, “I am even now arrived in England; nor did I foresee, when I yielded to pique in a secret return, how great a happiness I should ensure to myself. Disgusted with the injustice of the doting queen, (who has graced Howard with the laurels won by me), I resolved to call my friends secretly together, and,

Rensbroke is just gone to collect them all at midnight all are to meet here, and agree on the way most likely to punish her for her fair decision. By a happiness in my fortune, unguessed by him, and unforeseen by myself, we walked in this gallery while consulting; and when left alone, the fatigue of my journey made me throw myself on the couch in yon window, and draw the curtain, to indulge the drowsiness with which I was seized. How sweetly was my slumber disturbed by her who has broken so many with sorrow! Dear was the surprise with which I saw her enter; I saw the careful servant, as if actuated by love, enclose her and retire. Entranced with a pleasure which almost took from me the power of motion, I beheld her lovely eyes fixed on my inanimate portrait—I saw, or rather I felt, the tender expressions her unguarded soul uttered. What dreary ages have elapsed since my eyes have been thus permitted to fix themselves on hers—since in this dear hand I grasped the blessing that was to have given value, as well as happiness, to my future life!—* Alas,

my lord," resumed I, "recollect that those pleasant days, those flattering hopes, those dear wishes, a higher power has annihilated:—nor while the tie which robbed you of this trembling hand subsists, can I suffer it to be thus pressed in yours. Yet recollect at the same moment, the influence you still have over my heart—an influence virtue alone contests with you. Ah, gentle Essex, fix not an angry eye upon me; you know not the wound you give—the horrors you may occasion."—The wild accent of my voice struck even my own ear, and not daring to trust it with another syllable, I strove to bury my agitation and sensibility in silence. Alas! nature was too highly wrought. A suffocation more painful than fainting ensued; and agonized with surprise, tenderness, and fear, Essex would have called loudly for assistance. I retained just sense enough to prevent him; and throwing open a window, he then sought to recover me by vows of implicit obedience. My faculties were almost restored, when a noise at the

door made me wish them for ever annihilated. No longer able to consider the just or proper, I threw myself for shelter into those arms that gladly opened to receive me, and buried my face in the satin cloak of Essex. The voice I dreaded rushed upon my ear, and increasing my terror, caused me to grasp my safeguard more closely. A danger too pressing for apologies obliged that generous lover to throw me from him. I opened my fearful eyes, soon fixed by horror, to behold the swords of lord Essex and lord Arlington pointed at each other's bosoms. Why did not my frail and erring reason at this perilous moment forsake me? Alas, I was never more sensible of agony and terror!—I thought the cry I sent forth must be mortal; but perceiving it insufficient either to kill me or prevent the bloody conflict, I started up and forcibly flung myself between their swords: that of my husband pierced my shoulder, while his more skilful adversary wounded and disarmed him. Inured to every kind of misery save this, I beheld my streaming blood with a dismay unknown before, and

from the faintness it occasioned, never doubted but that I approached the period so often wished for, and pronounced myself dying. Then raising my eyes to the pale statue of Essex, who resting on the two swords, hung in silent agony over me, I adjured him to vindicate my fame; and beseeching the Almighty to receive my guiltless spirit, and crown his future days with that honour and happiness I alone had interrupted, I turned towards the erring wretch beside me, with whose flowing blood mine mingled, and having attested in broken accents my innocence, deigned to request his forgiveness. I had no longer, however, power even to receive it. Extreme weakness blended for once objects ever before so distinct, and I ceased to feel for the lover, or dread the husband.

END OF VOL. II.

